Coloma Hook and Ladder Company No.1

&

The History of Fires in Coloma

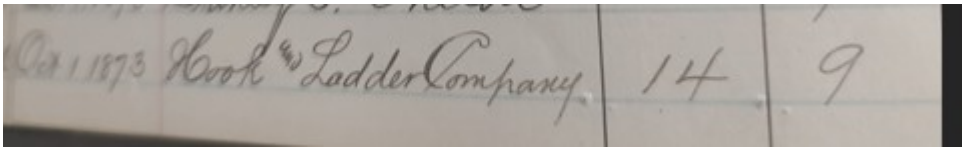
1853-1933

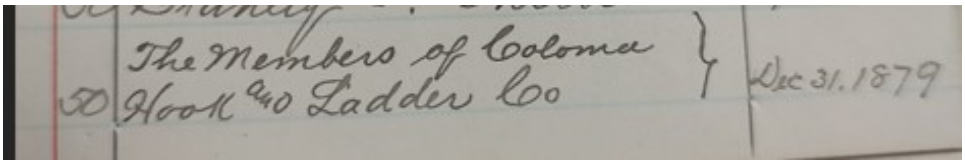
Formation and Early History

There is little information regarding the formation of the Coloma Hook and Company #1 prior to the Empire County Argus being established in November of 1853.

November 10th, 1853, this issue of the Empire County Argus reports on the completion of the new fire house and credits the Fire Company for already saving Coloma from destruction.

The demise of Coloma Hook and Ladder Company #1 is also not well documented. However, the El Dorado County deed records show that they existed as late as September 1879. Hopefully a more period account will become available in the future as well as subsequent owners of the Fire Hall property.





What we do know about the Fire Company is taken directly from period newspaper articles. For the most part these articles are produced here in their entirety.

We are grateful for the reporting by the journalists of the time who, without their efforts, the history of the Coloma Hook and Ladder would have been lost to history.

The California State Parks Historian Hero E. Rensch stated in his 1962 report “A Preliminary Research Study of Historic Houses on Main Street, 1852-1865”,

“*Fire Companies held a high place in the social life of the 1850’s. In them deep friendships were formed, with frequent reunions, farewells, and patriotic celebrations.*

“The July Fourth celebration of 1855 was one of the highlights in the history of Coloma’s early social life. In it the Hook and Ladder boys, splendid in their uniforms, joined with the Mason’s, Odd Fellows, Son of Temperance, and other citizen groups and individuals to put on one of the most colorful affairs of Coloma’s prosperous years as County Seat.”

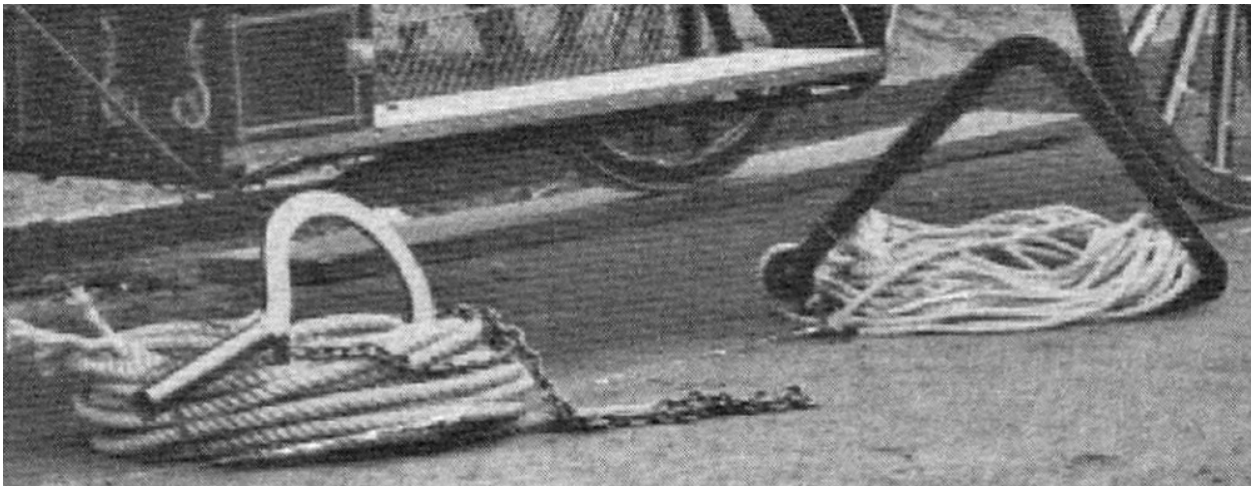
Fire was the Nemesis of Gold Rush Towns

The fear of fire was the constant danger to the gold rush towns with their structures made of wood and canvas. Many early California towns were burned and never rebuilt while others were rebuilt several times.

Coloma was spared from major destruction unlike the neighboring towns of Georgetown, Placerville, and Mormon Island, along with others that suffered destruction.

Fire Equipment

Finding no records that described the equipment used by the Coloma Hook and Ladder Company we believe that generally, prior to the arrival of hand pumpers to California (fire Engines) which they did not possess, buckets and hooks were used to access and extinguish the fires within structures as well as wooden ladders to access the roofs.



“The curved hook is for pulling down buildings or portions of buildings to create a fire break. In the early days of wood buildings and row housing, the only way to affect a fire break was to tear down a dwelling or outbuilding. The curved hook had ten feet of chain attached to it. At the end of the chain was a length of stout rope. The hook had a hollow handle so that a pike pole could be used to position the hook and chain on a burning structure. The end of the rope was attached to a team of strong horses and the building was pulled apart to facilitate a fire break.” “The flat hook, with a pulley in its base, was for hoisting items over a roof or wall.” (“The “Hooks” of a Hook & Ladder – Legeros Fire Blog”)[i]

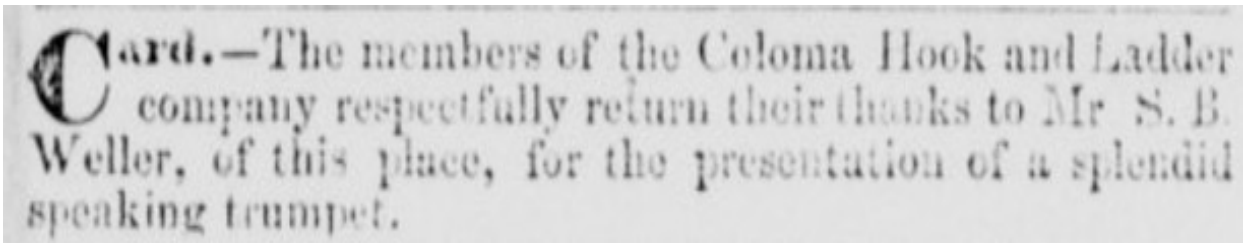
During the period fire buckets were manufactured of either leather or tin, in some cases wood. Many towns require residents to have their own bucket for the ready on the outside of their house or business. Water in Coloma to fight fire being supplied by horse troughs or ditches.

Parade belts were custom made to identify the fire company as the example shows.

An Example of an 1850’s fire uniform, leather helmet, Canvas coat, wool pants, and shirt with the parade belt. This photo also shows a Speaking Trumpet that was used to give orders to those fighting the fire.

The Beginning of the Hook and Ladder Company

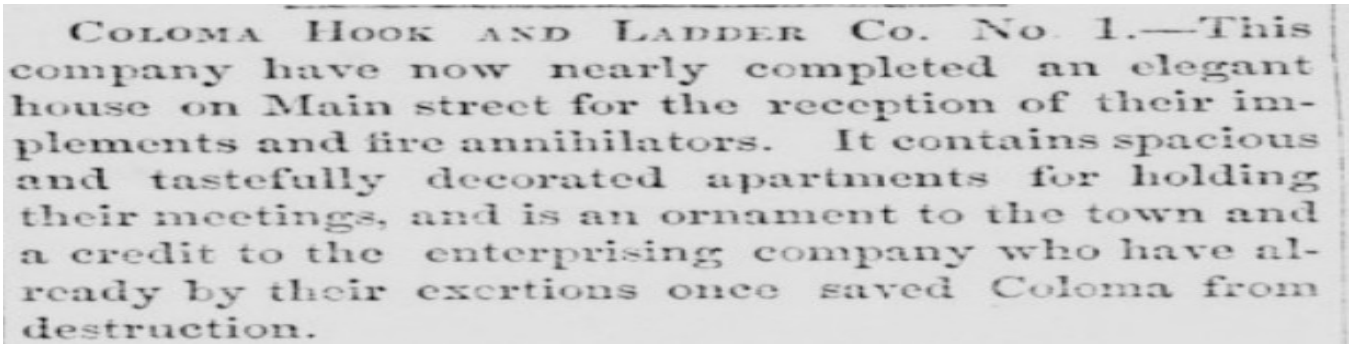
Unfortunately, without documentation of the formation of the Hook and Ladder Company, our history begins with the first issues of the Empire County Argus in November of 1853.



Card.—The members of the Coloma Hook and Ladder company respectfully return their thanks to Mr S. B. Weller, of this place, for the presentation of a splendid speaking trumpet.

Prior to the 1853 completion of the firehouse “Mrs. Samuel B. Weller donated a splendid speaking trumpet to the department.”[ii]

Completion of the new Fire House

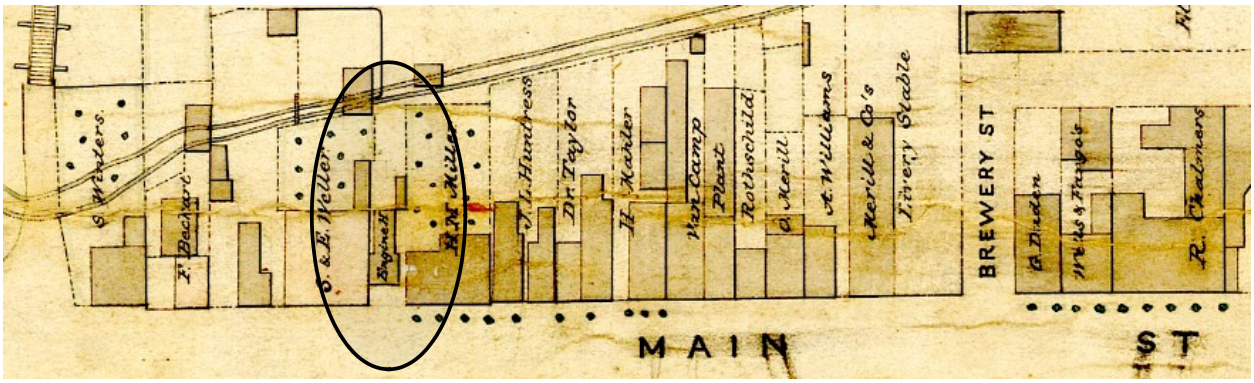


COLOMA HOOK AND LADDER CO. No 1.—This company have now nearly completed an elegant house on Main street for the reception of their implements and fire annihilators. It contains spacious and tastefully decorated apartments for holding their meetings, and is an ornament to the town and a credit to the enterprising company who have already by their exertions once saved Coloma from destruction.

The Coloma Hook and Ladder Companies fire hall was between Weller’s store and Millers on the North side of Main Street and shown as the Engine House on the Herman Au 1875 map of Coloma. Miller’s property became the famous Zelner’s Miners Drug Store.

The firehouse being described as a small building with a small bell tower on the top with spacious apartments for the companies’ meetings.[iv]

The street view of Coloma as drawn by Mr. Johnson in 1860 shows the Coloma Hook and Ladder Company #1 on Main Street.



Coloma Hook and Ladder Company #1's location is shown on the 1857 Herman Au map of Coloma as Engine House.

In December 1853 the members of the Coloma Hook and Ladder Company visited the Neptune Fire Company in Placerville.

But the great event was the Ball at the Miners House in the evening. A fine saloon, beautifully and tastefully prepared, splendid music, and to crown all more ladies than we have ever seen together in California, added much to the pleasures of the evening.

We never attended a ball at which the guests appeared to be so well pleased as at this. May it be our lot to attend many such reunions. The supper so bountifully and delicately provided by the host, D. W. Levan, we must say did full honor to the occasion. The festivities were continued to a late hour. Everything passed off with the utmost order and decorum, as was to be expected at the hands of the gentlemanly members of the Neptune Hose Co.

The courtesy and attention shown by the Placerville Co. to the Coloma Co., will be remembered with pleasure for a long time. We hope such meetings may often occur. They strengthen the good feelings of the citizens of the two places. They bring out the generous qualities of men. There is great danger of these being choked up in this country by our love for the almighty dollar. May usefulness and honor ever attend the members of the Neptune Hose Co. of Placerville.

v

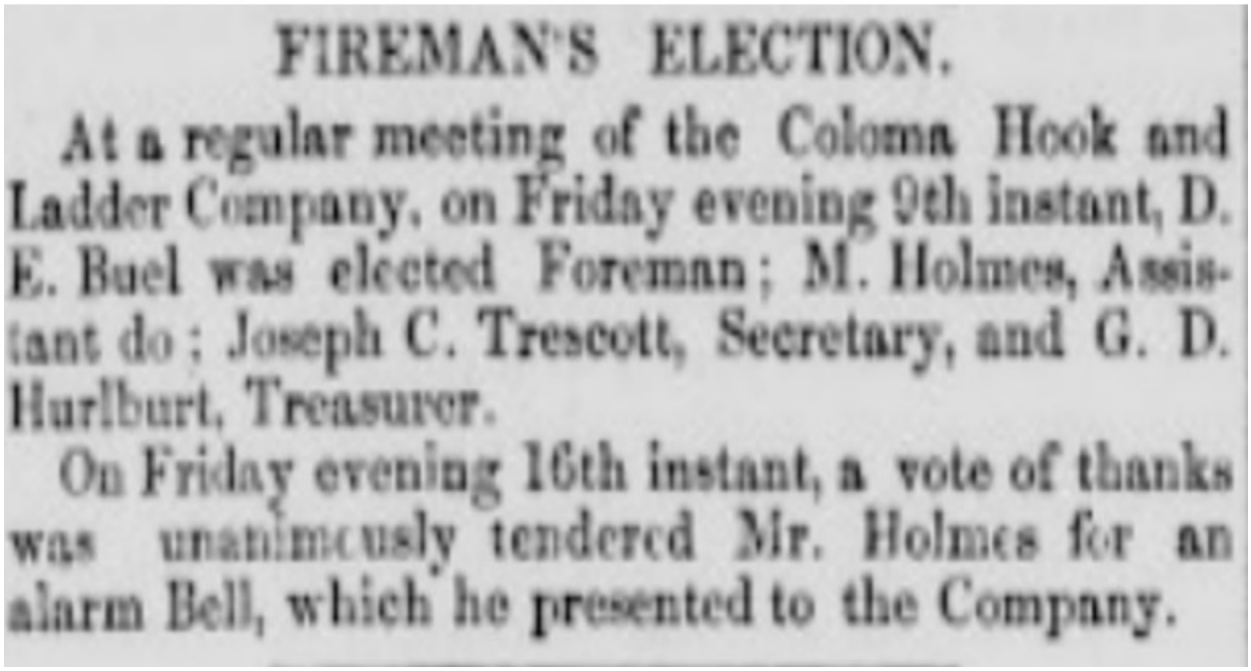
Coloma Hook and Ladder Company planning its own Ball.

☞ We are pleased to learn that the Hook and Ladder Company of this place, contemplate giving a Ball at the "Metropolitan Hall," one of the largest, neatest, and best adapted rooms in the mines for such purpose, on the 21st of the present month — If energy, enthusiasm, and an abundance of means can make it go off finely, then indeed will it be a magnificent affair, and the Firemen will long remember their first ball in this place with mingled feelings of pride and pleasure.

We learn from one of the committee of arrangements, that all the Firemen in the county will be invited, besides a number of ladies and gentlemen. A Band from Sacramento will be in attendance.

Judging from the means at the disposal of the committee, and the unquallified approval it meets with from our citizens, we are safe in predicting that it will be far superior to any thing of the kind ever gotten up in the mines, and equal to many of the Grand Balls in the large cities.

Donation of the Fire House Alarm Bell



FIREMAN'S ELECTION.

At a regular meeting of the Coloma Hook and Ladder Company, on Friday evening 9th instant, D. E. Buel was elected Foreman; M. Holmes, Assistant do; Joseph C. Trescott, Secretary, and G. D. Hurlburt, Treasurer.

On Friday evening 16th instant, a vote of thanks was unanimously tendered Mr. Holmes for an alarm Bell, which he presented to the Company.

In December 1853 Mr. Mathew Holmes donated a bell for the new fire hall's tower.

Known Members of the Coloma Hook and Ladder Company, as recorded by the Empire County Argus, these reports show that there were over thirty members of the Company.

Dec. 9, 1853, Election of Officers

D.E. Buel, Forman, (Sheriff of El Dorado County).

M. Holmes, Assistant Forman (Mule Packer from Sacramento to Coloma).

Joseph C. Trescott, Secretary, (Owner of Fashion and Alhambra Saloons)

G.D. Hurlbert, Treasurer (returned to the East Coast in May 1854, partner in Hurlburt and Barr's Coloma Livery).

Robert F. Davis (Postmaster) Died in 1857 from an overturned wagon, buried in the Coloma Pioneer Cemetery.

Thomas H. Williams. (Attorney at Newell and Williams)

Mathew Holmes (Peoples Store).

Mr. Smith joined in 1855.

John Marchant joined in 1855. (Marchant and Crocker, American House Hotel).

At the present time, the whereabouts of the speaking trumpet and fire house alarm bell used by the Coloma Hook and Ladder are unknown. No artifacts from the Hook and Ladder Company or its members have been located at the time of this publication. Hopefully, articles will be found and repatriated to Coloma as time passes.

On December 21st of 1853 the Coloma Hook and Ladder Company hosted their first Ball with an introduction by Colonel Thomas Robertson, a parade, meal, and dancing into the night followed,

THE BALL.

The grand affair, so long talked of in our midst, has come off at last. No Ball that has ever been given in our county created any thing like the interest that this did—the Ball of the Coloma Hook and Ladder Company.

It came off on Wednesday night 21st instant. 'Twas given at the Metropolitan Hotel—Mike Borowsky's—a large and ample Hall, affording fine accommodations for the proper enjoyment of the large company present. On Tuesday and Wednesday our town was thronged with citizens from various parts of our county. All sorts of conveyances were in requisition. Almost every town and hamlet in El Dorado was represented, and that too right well. Placerville, Diamond Springs, Mud Springs, Georgetown, Mameluke Hill, Johntown, Kelsey's, Columbia, Cold Springs, Gold Hill, Spanish Flat, Uniontown, Salmon Falls—all sent delegations.

But the guests of the occasion were the Neptune Hose Co. and the Hope Hook and Ladder Co., from Placerville, the Auburn Hook and Ladder Co. and a delegation of firemen from No. 3, Sacramento.— The companies from Placerville were received by the Coloma Co. at Gold Hill, at 2 P. M. The Placerville Companies were attended by an excellent band of music, quite a novel and interesting feature. The Placerville and Coloma Companies passed through Coloma down to Uniontown, where, at 4 o'clock, they received the Auburn Hook and Ladder Co., thence returning to town and halting in front of Borowsky's Saloon, the Companies from Auburn and Placerville were welcomed to our town, in behalf of the Fire Company and the citizens, by Col. Thos. Robertson. The address was listened to with great interest throughout, as it well deserved. The whole body, forming a large and imposing number of finely mounted men, were then dispersed to quarters.

A large delegation of ladies came over from Placerville, some from Auburn, and some from Sacramento.

We cannot but congratulate the county seat of our sister county upon having so fine a corps of men in the service of the fire department—they are men for service when needed.

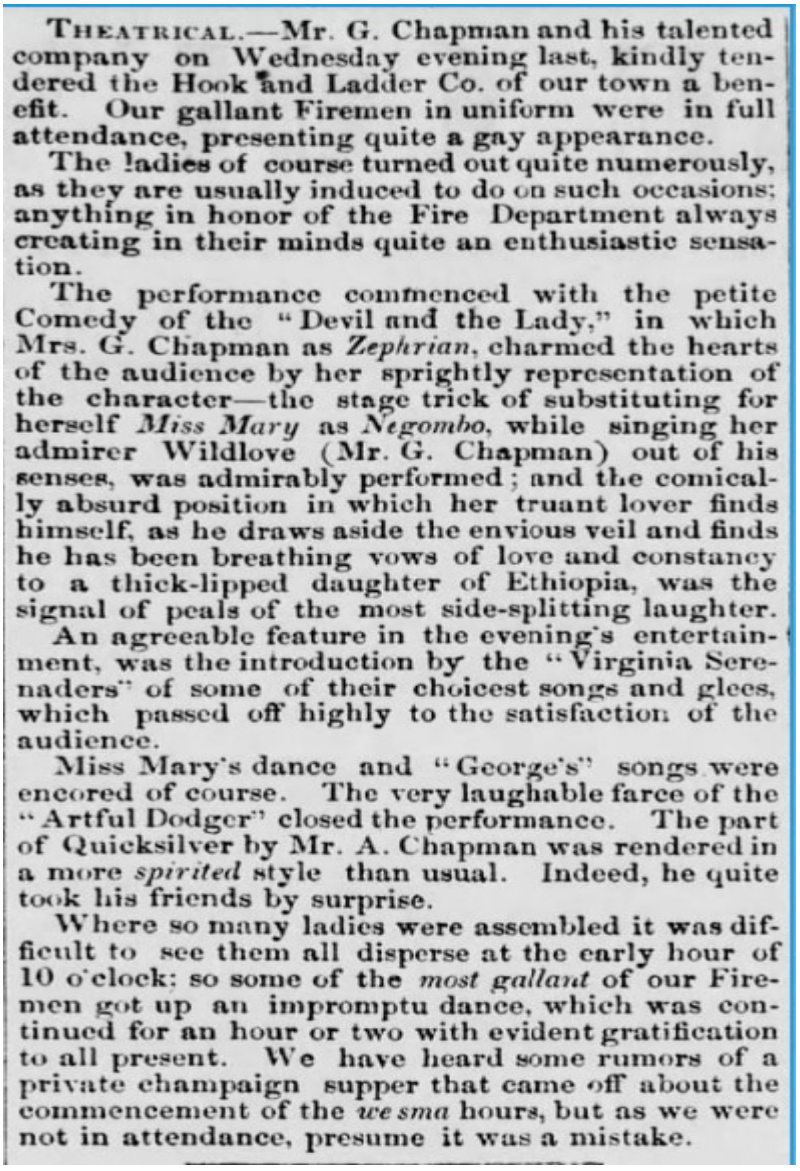
The Companies from Placerville turned out in handsome style and in goodly numbers. A finer body of men we never have seen or expect to behold. The citizens of that town should prize their Fire Department highly.

Nine o'clock came—the doors of the dancing hall were thrown open, the trumpet sounded the call, the band commenced playing a fine march and the company entered. We were amazed, bewildered—it is five long years since we have seen so many of the "fairer part of creation" together. We can boast, with truth, that we had as beautiful women, as gallant gentlemen, and as fine music as we wish to see and hear together. The dance proceeded with animation. Supper was called. The company marched into the supper hall, where were laid six tables, capable of accommodating over 300 persons, which were all filled. The tables fairly groaned under the choicest viands, prepared in the most tempting style. The company did full justice to it. The dance was continued till nearly 4 o'clock A. M., and every thing passed off in the most quiet and agreeable manner possible. We can boast of it as one of the finest and most agreeable gatherings ever had in the mountains. Great praise is due the various committees for the quiet and agreeable manner in which every thing passed off. May it be our lot to attend many such parties.

☞At a meeting of the *Coloma Hook and Ladder Company*, on the 30th ult., Samuel Stephenson was unanimously elected Assistant Foreman, vice M. Holmes resigned.

January 1854

In January 1854, a performance to benefit the Coloma Hook and Ladder Company by the Metropolitan Theatrical Company of San Francisco.



THEATRICAL.—Mr. G. Chapman and his talented company on Wednesday evening last, kindly tendered the Hook and Ladder Co. of our town a benefit. Our gallant Firemen in uniform were in full attendance, presenting quite a gay appearance.

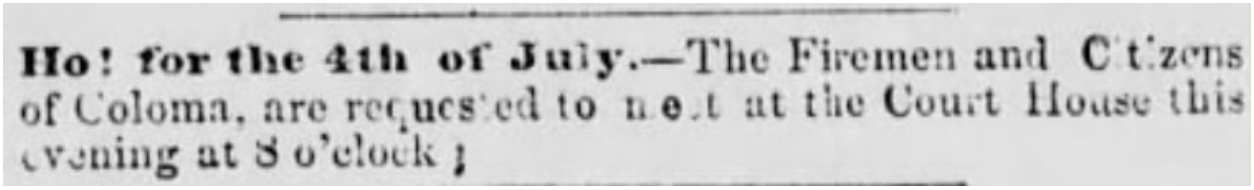
The ladies of course turned out quite numerously, as they are usually induced to do on such occasions; anything in honor of the Fire Department always creating in their minds quite an enthusiastic sensation.

The performance commenced with the petite Comedy of the "Devil and the Lady," in which Mrs. G. Chapman as *Zephrian*, charmed the hearts of the audience by her sprightly representation of the character—the stage trick of substituting for herself *Miss Mary* as *Negombo*, while singing her admirer Wildlove (Mr. G. Chapman) out of his senses, was admirably performed; and the comically absurd position in which her truant lover finds himself, as he draws aside the envious veil and finds he has been breathing vows of love and constancy to a thick-lipped daughter of Ethiopia, was the signal of peals of the most side-splitting laughter.

An agreeable feature in the evening's entertainment, was the introduction by the "Virginia Serenaders" of some of their choicest songs and glees, which passed off highly to the satisfaction of the audience.

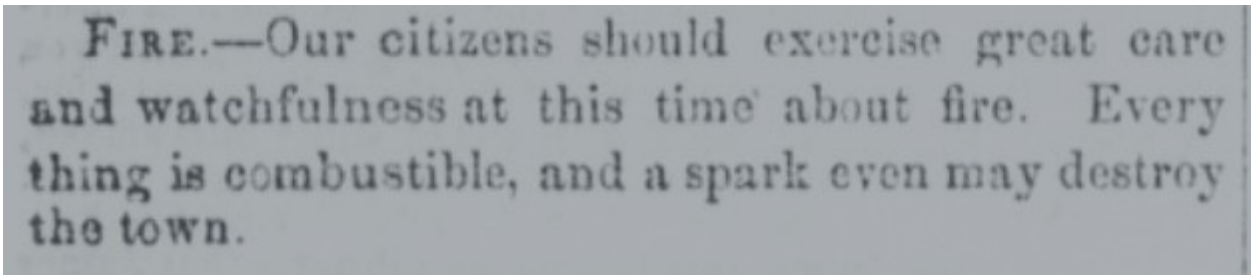
Miss Mary's dance and "George's" songs were encored of course. The very laughable farce of the "Artful Dodger" closed the performance. The part of Quicksilver by Mr. A. Chapman was rendered in a more *spirited* style than usual. Indeed, he quite took his friends by surprise.

Where so many ladies were assembled it was difficult to see them all disperse at the early hour of 10 o'clock; so some of the *most gallant* of our Firemen got up an impromptu dance, which was continued for an hour or two with evident gratification to all present. We have heard some rumors of a private champaign supper that came off about the commencement of the *we sma* hours, but as we were not in attendance, presume it was a mistake.



Ho! for the 4th of July.—The Firemen and Citizens of Coloma, are requested to meet at the Court House this evening at 8 o'clock;

June 27, 1854



FIRE.—Our citizens should exercise great care and watchfulness at this time about fire. Every thing is combustible, and a spark even may destroy the town.

July 15, 1854, After a fire devestaded both Georgetowna and Placerville warnings were issued for Coloma.

CAUTION.—It would, perhaps, be well for our citizens to use the utmost caution relative to fire. The material with which Coloma is built, is very combustible, and any chance fire would almost destroy the town. Every defect in stove pipes should be carefully attended to, as well as the strictest care to the deposit of ashes should be observed.—Cigar smokers, too, should be careful about throwing their unextinguished "stumps" in places where there is the least chance for ignition. No one can observe too much care, and all our citizens know the chances they have to extinguish a fire are small, when it is once commenced.

July 28, 1854

As remote and wild as the “Mines” were, they were routinely visited by traveling entertainment. There were a variety of Circus, Plays, Singers and Orators that visited Coloma, only three were recorded donating to the new Fire Company.

Sept. 1854 Meeting

At a regular meeting of the Coloma Hook & Ladder Company, the following persons were elected officers, for the ensuing quarter. S. S. Brooks, Foreman. M. Holmes, Assistant Foreman, J. Marchant Secretary. and S N Nichols Treasurer.

N B. The Coloma Hook & Ladder Company, has been incorporated according to law, so those joining it, will be free from jury duty.

J. MARCHANT Secretary.

Announcement of Incorporation as the Coloma Hook and Ladder Company, announcing that those who join will be free of Jury Duty.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AN ACT *supplementary to "An Act to exempt Firemen from Militia Service and Jury duty," passed March* 25, 1853.—[Passed May 6, 1854.]

The People of the State of California, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Fire companies in unincorporated towns.

SECTION 1. When fire companies are formed in unincorporated and unorganized towns and villages, the members thereof shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges of "an Act to exempt firemen from militia service and jury duty," passed March twenty-fifth, eighteen hundred and fifty three.

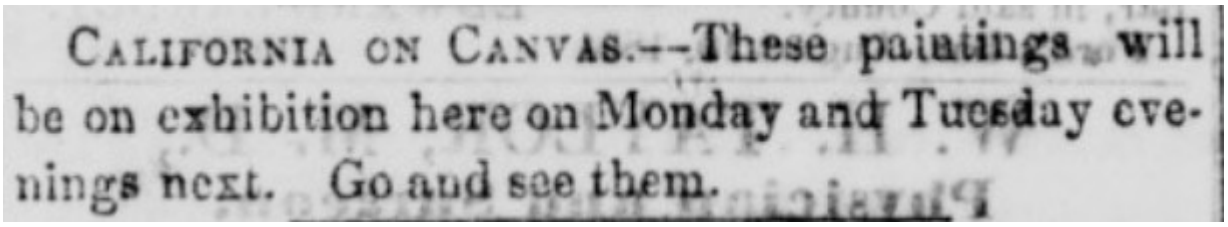
Evidence of organization necessary.

SEC. 2. Companies hitherto formed, and that may be formed, in such unincorporated and unorganized towns and villages, shall deposit with the Justice of the Peace of such town or village, a certificate in writing, containing the date of the organization of such company, the company's name, and the names of its officers, and the roll of the active and honorary members thereof, which certificate shall be evidence of the existence of such company. The certificate required in this section shall be renewed every six months.

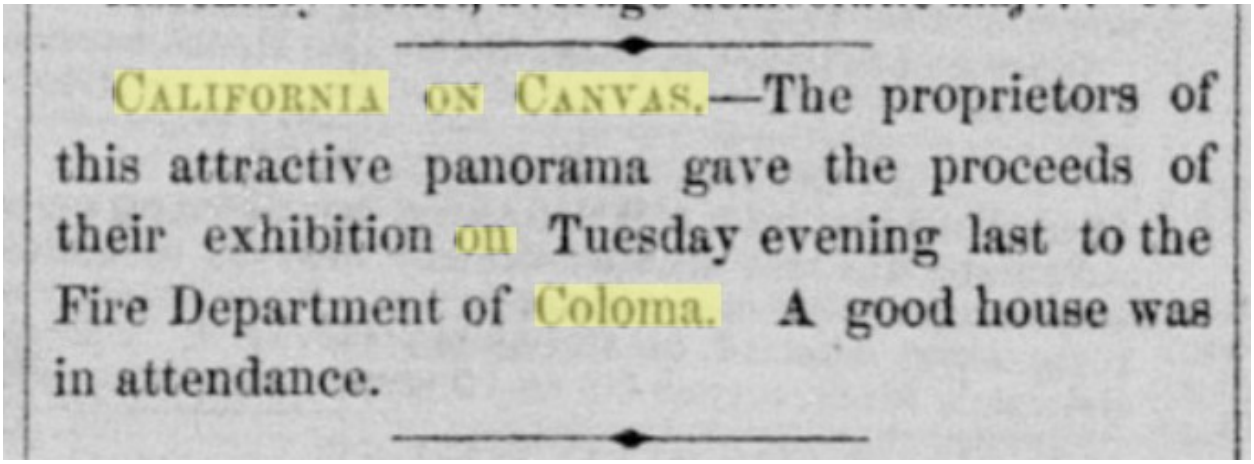
Renewal of certificate.

A 2025 search by the California State Secretary of State Archives was unable to locate a copy of the Articles of Incorporation.

September 1854 the traveling exhibition "California on Canvas" performance and donation to the Coloma Hook and Ladder

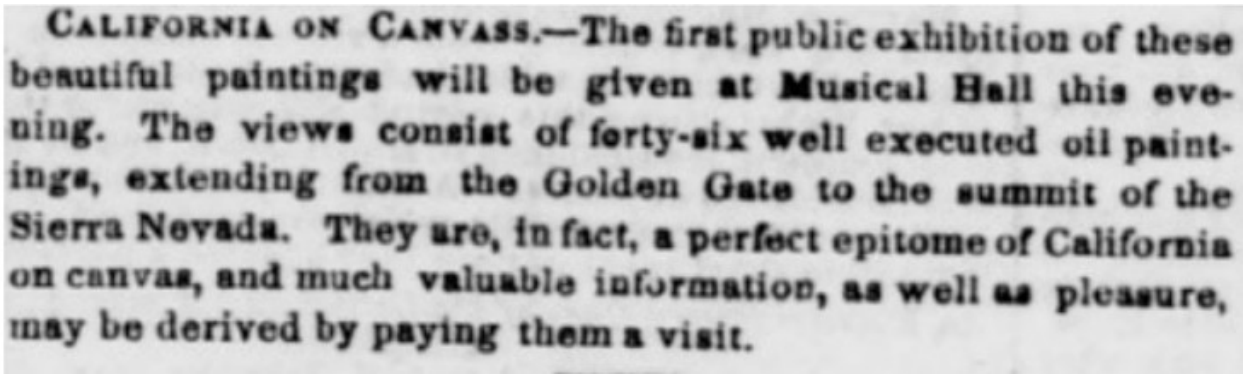


CALIFORNIA ON CANVAS.—These paintings will be on exhibition here on Monday and Tuesday evenings next. Go and see them.



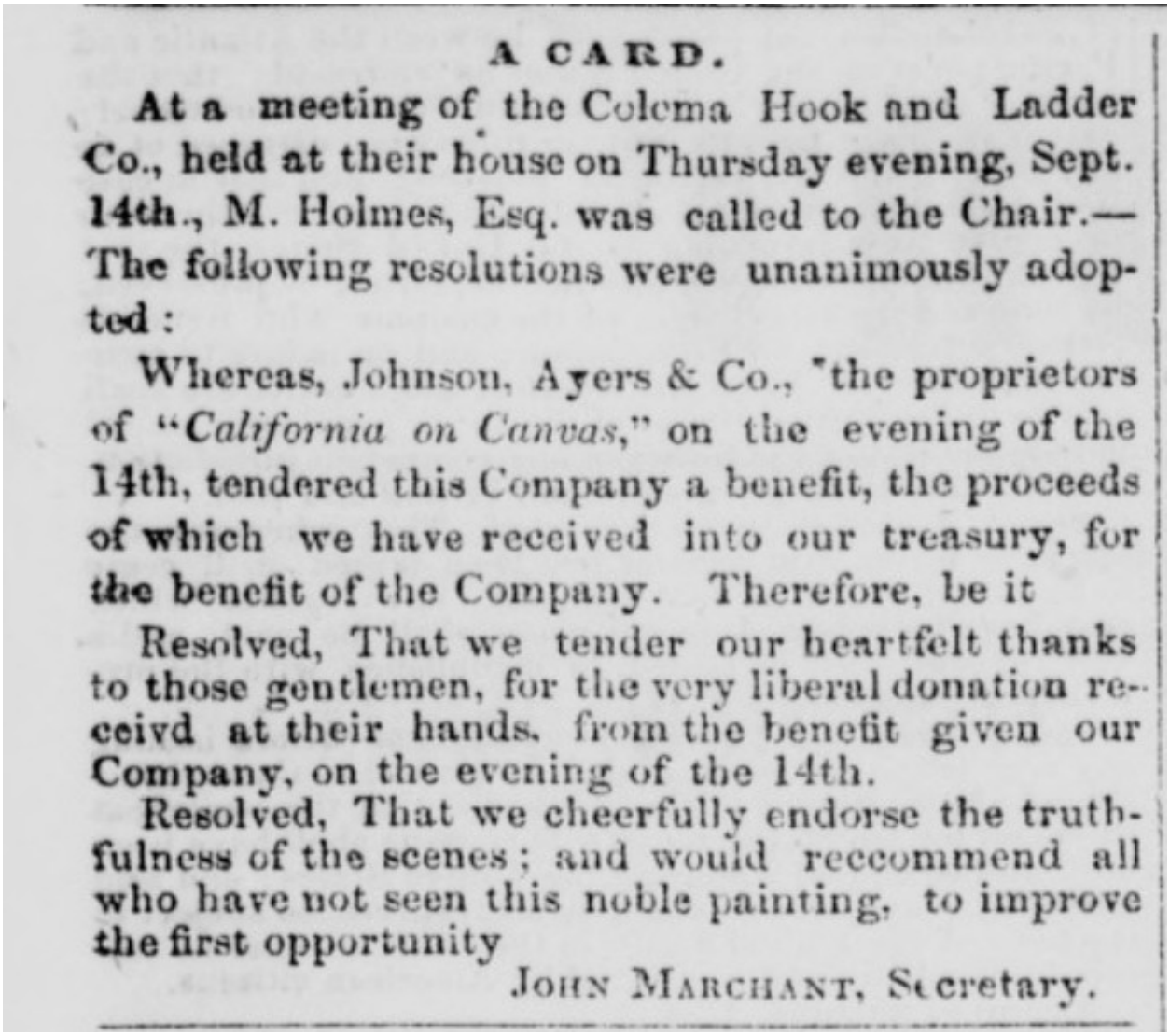
CALIFORNIA ON CANVAS.—The proprietors of this attractive panorama gave the proceeds of their exhibition on Tuesday evening last to the Fire Department of Coloma. A good house was in attendance.

Hero E. Rensch the State Historian writes, "*the most famous of the entertainers at the Hall in 1855 were the Chapmans that remarkable family, well-known to San Francisco theatergoers, as well as those of the "gold towns" of the Mother Lode country. Known as the Metropolitan Theatrical Company, it was composed of Messrs. Hamilton, Goad, W. Chapman, his sister, Miss Caroline Chapman, and others.*"



CALIFORNIA ON CANVASS.—The first public exhibition of these beautiful paintings will be given at Musical Hall this evening. The views consist of forty-six well executed oil paintings, extending from the Golden Gate to the summit of the Sierra Nevada. They are, in fact, a perfect epitome of California on canvas, and much valuable information, as well as pleasure, may be derived by paying them a visit.

Johnson, Ayres & Company, the owners of the California on Canvas exhibition premiered in San Francisco on the evening of August 7, 1854. The Daily Alta California reported that the opening and following performances were well attended and encouraged people to attend.



A CARD.

At a meeting of the Coloma Hook and Ladder Co., held at their house on Thursday evening, Sept. 14th., M. Holmes, Esq. was called to the Chair.— The following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

Whereas, Johnson, Ayers & Co., the proprietors of "*California on Canvas*," on the evening of the 14th, tendered this Company a benefit, the proceeds of which we have received into our treasury, for the benefit of the Company. Therefore, be it

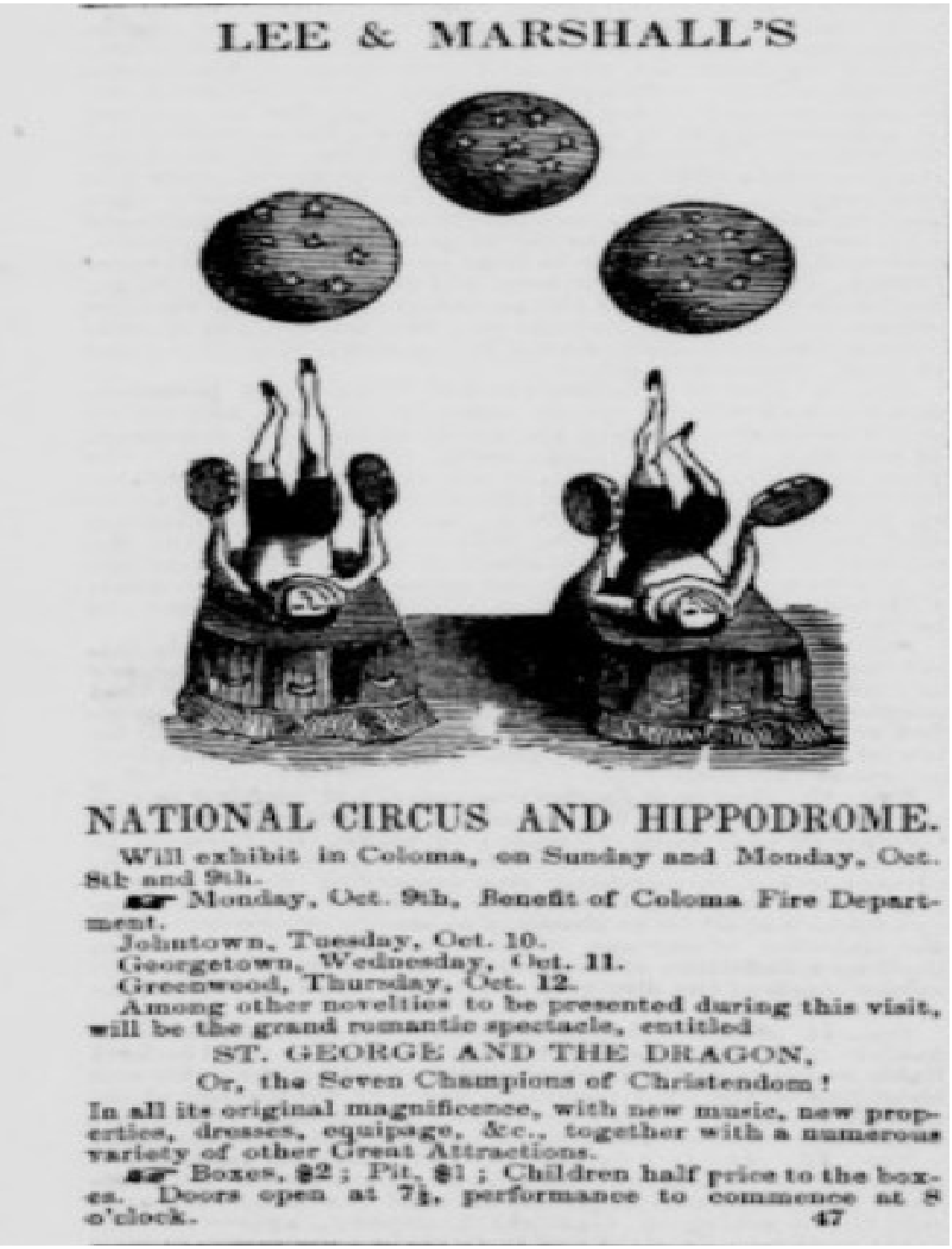
Resolved, That we tender our heartfelt thanks to those gentlemen, for the very liberal donation receivd at their hands, from the benefit given our Company, on the evening of the 14th.

Resolved, That we cheerfully endorse the truthfulness of the scenes; and would reccommend all who have not seen this noble painting, to improve the first opportunity

JOHN MARCHANT, Secretary.

Not only the fire companies, but schools also were recipients of donations from the various touring Circus and Entertainment troupes throughout the gold fields.

The Circus comes to Coloma with a benefit performance with proceeds going towards the Hook and Ladder Company.



LEE & MARSHALL'S

NATIONAL CIRCUS AND HIPPODROME.

Will exhibit in Coloma, on Sunday and Monday, Oct. 8th and 9th.

☞ Monday, Oct. 9th, Benefit of Coloma Fire Department.

Johntown, Tuesday, Oct. 10.
Georgetown, Wednesday, Oct. 11.
Greenwood, Thursday, Oct. 12.

Among other novelties to be presented during this visit, will be the grand romantic spectacle, entitled

ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON,

Or, the Seven Champions of Christendom!

In all its original magnificence, with new music, new properties, dresses, equipage, &c., together with a numerous variety of other Great Attractions.

☞ Boxes, $2; Pit, $1; Children half price to the boxes. Doors open at 7½, performance to commence at 8 o'clock.

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During October of 1854, the Lee & Marshalls, National Circus and Hippodrome exhibits in Coloma, Johnstown, Georgetown, and Greenwood. [xviii]

COLOMA, October 1st, 1854.

To the Coloma Fire Department.

Gentlemen—It being the desire of Messrs. Lee & Marshall, proprietors of the National Circus, that I should tender a benefit to the Fire Department of this place. I therefore take great pleasure in embracing this opportunity of carrying out their wishes. If this proposition should meet your approbation, I would mention Monday evening, Oct. 9th. as the most convenient time for the Company to give said benefit. With the highest personal regards,

I remain very respectfully,
F. H. HARMON, Agent.

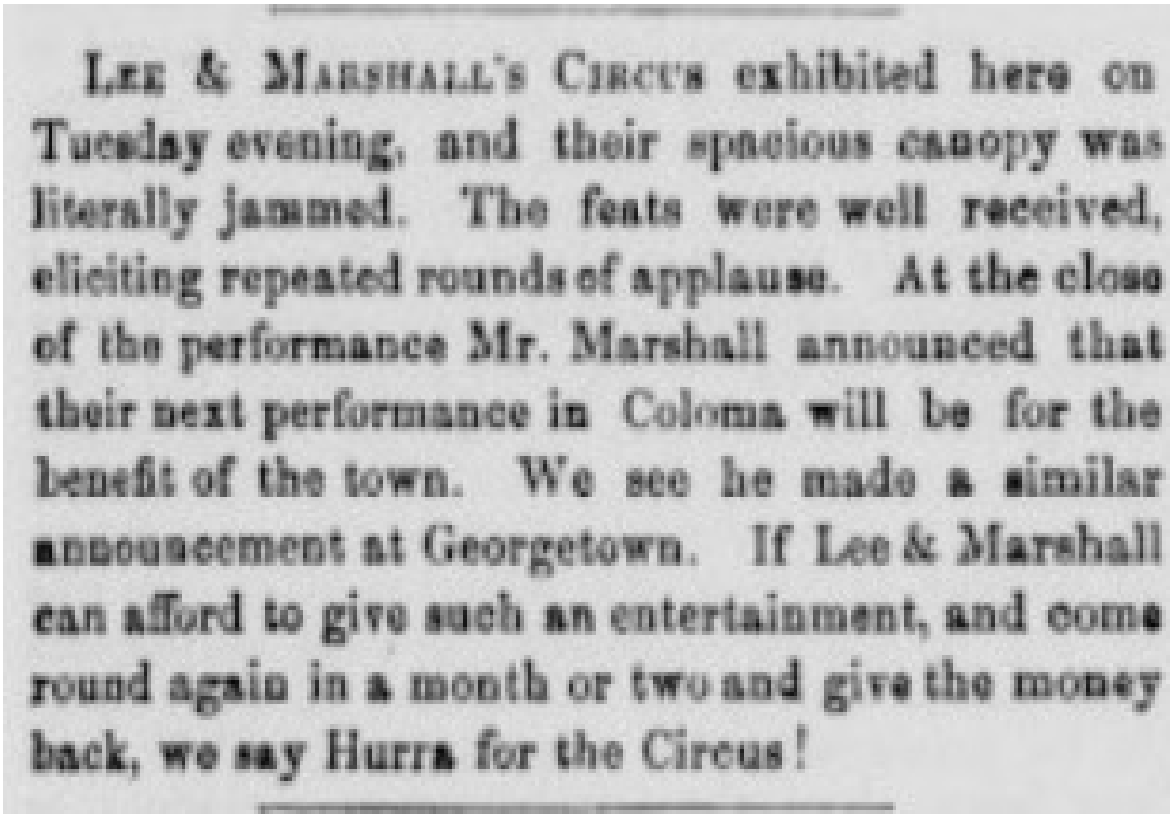
COLOMA, October 1st, 1854.

F. H. Harmon, Agent Messrs. Lee & Marshall's National Circus.

Sir—Your favor tendering the Fire Department of Coloma a Benefit is received. Allow me, in behalf of the Department, to express through you our obligations to the proprietors of the National Circus, and to accept the favor so generously offered. Your arrangements for Monday evening, 9th inst, meet the convenience and approbation of the Department.

You will tender to Messrs Lee & Marshall our assurance of regard.

With respect I remain yours &c.,
M. HOLMES,
Asst. Foreman Coloma Hook and Ladder Co.



Lee & Marshall's Circus exhibited here on Tuesday evening, and their spacious canopy was literally jammed. The feats were well received, eliciting repeated rounds of applause. At the close of the performance Mr. Marshall announced that their next performance in Coloma will be for the benefit of the town. We see he made a similar announcement at Georgetown. If Lee & Marshall can afford to give such an entertainment, and come round again in a month or two and give the money back, we say Hurra for the Circus!

21 April 1855

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JOHN MARCHANT, Secretary.

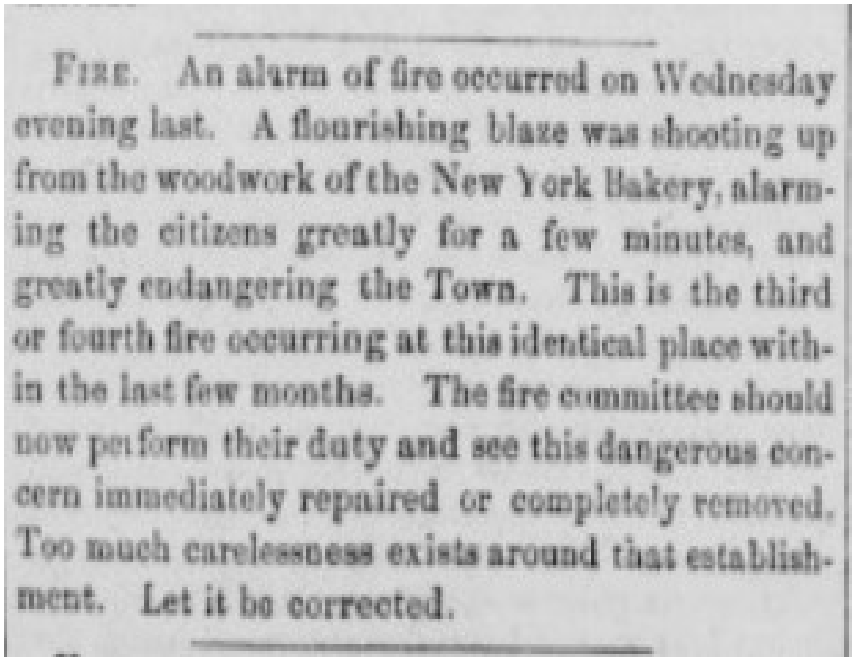
During the November 1854, Execution of" Logan and Lipsey" the Coloma Hook and Ladder was placed in charge of the prisoners. Guarding prisoners to the gallows was not a normal activity for the local fire companies. This most likely was the only time a fire company in California guarded prisoners for their hanging.

Execution of Logan and Lipsey
AT COLOMA.

The execution of James Logan, for the murder of Fennel, at Coon Hollow, and William Lipsey, for the murder of Powelson, at Cold Springs, took place at Coloma yesterday—Friday 3d inst. They were the first criminals ever executed by the officers of the law in El Dorado county; and the assemblage of the people was larger than was ever before known in the county, or, probably ever will be again. Early in the morning the different roads leading from Coloma to all parts of the county, even the most remote, were literally lined with one continuous mass of human beings—some on foot, some on horseback, and others in carriages, coaches, wagons, carts, &c. So intense and wide-spread was the morbid curiosity which had been excited, that it seemed as if the people of the whole county was controlled by an invisible power, directing their steps to Coloma. Citizens, Chinamen and Digger Indians—all seemed to be controlled by the same influence. Long before the hour of execution arrived, the streets of Coloma were thronged with a dense mass of human beings, while thousands were congregated on the hills around.

At 12 o'clock, M., the Sheriff proceeded to take the prisoners from the jail to the scaffold, which had been erected on the hillside. The Coloma Hook and Ladder Company, armed with guns and revolvers, formed a hollow square around the wagon provided to convey the prisoners. Logan walked out of the jail with as much apparent indifference as a man could well manifest under such circumstances; and although his head was "silvered o'er with age"—notwithstanding the fate that awaited him—he stepped into the wagon that contained his coffin with the buoyancy of youth and the vigor of manhood, scorning the assistance that was proffered him. With Lipsey it was entirely different. For a week he had taken scarcely any food; he was debilitated in body and broken in spirit. It was terribly apparent that he realized fully his awful situation. He was assisted into the wagon and remained as one dead or chained to his seat until he reached the place of execution. Logan ascended the scaffold with a firm step, bible in hand, and for all the world with the air of a preacher of the gospel about to address a sinful people whom he was anxious to exhort to repentance. Lipsey was almost carried up—his eyes were fixed, and presenting a vacant, death-like stare.

May 20,1854



FIRE. An alarm of fire occurred on Wednesday evening last. A flourishing blaze was shooting up from the woodwork of the New York Bakery, alarming the citizens greatly for a few minutes, and greatly endangering the Town. This is the third or fourth fire occurring at this identical place within the last few months. The fire committee should now perform their duty and see this dangerous concern immediately repaired or completely removed. Too much carelessness exists around that establishment. Let it be corrected.

The New York Bakery was situated up from the Nichols Hotel on Main Street.

NEW YORK BAKERY.

MAIN STREET, JUST ABOVE "NICHOLS' HOTEL," COLOMA.

FAMILY BREAD baked every morning and night and delivered to customers.

Refreshments,

Hot-Coffee, Pies, Cakes, &c., &c., kept constantly on hand.

MASON & HINKLEY,
PROPRIETORS.

December 3d, 1853. 3tf

Location of the New York Bakery to the right of the Peoples Store as published in the Sacramento Pictorial Union in 1853.

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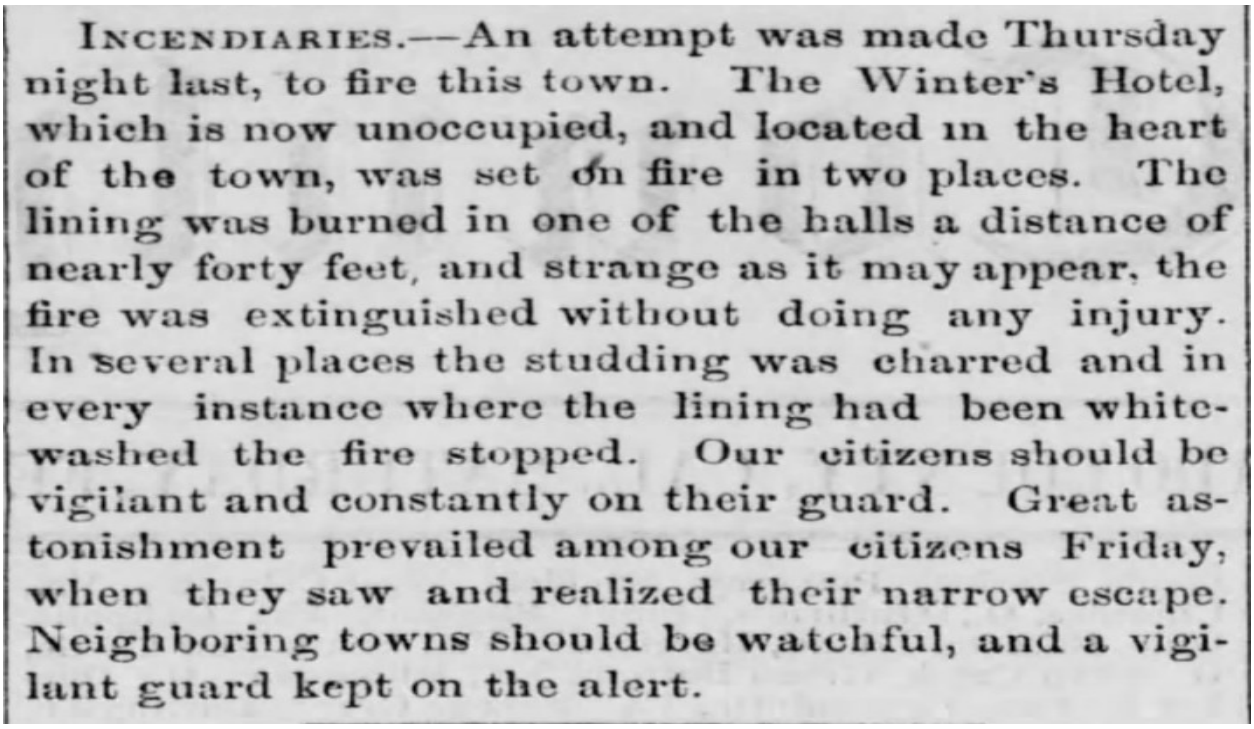
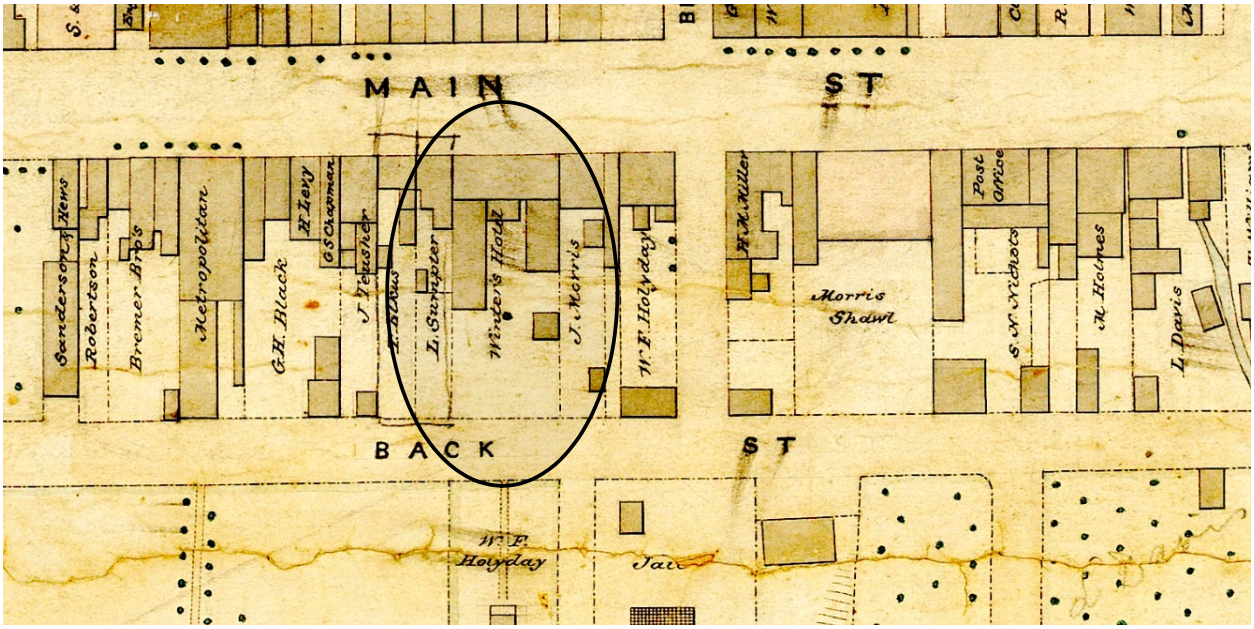
Arson or Incendiarism was prevalent in early Coloma

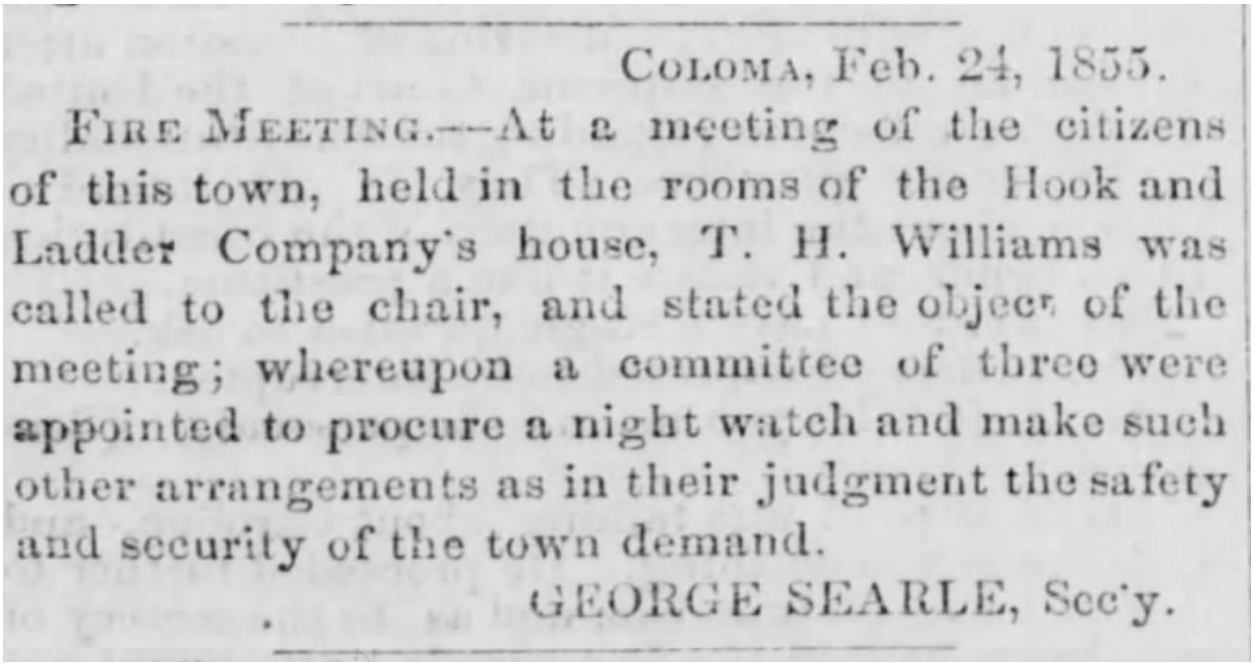
The first reported fire was the attempted arson of the then vacant Winter's Hotel.



INCENDIARIES.—An attempt was made Thursday night last, to fire this town. The Winter's Hotel, which is now unoccupied, and located in the heart of the town, was set on fire in two places. The lining was burned in one of the halls a distance of nearly forty feet, and strange as it may appear, the fire was extinguished without doing any injury. In several places the studding was charred and in every instance where the lining had been whitewashed the fire stopped. Our citizens should be vigilant and constantly on their guard. Great astonishment prevailed among our citizens Friday, when they saw and realized their narrow escape. Neighboring towns should be watchful, and a vigilant guard kept on the alert.



The location of the Winter's Hotel, if ablaze would have been disastrous for the surrounding buildings.



COLOMA, Feb. 24, 1855.

FIRE MEETING.—At a meeting of the citizens of this town, held in the rooms of the Hook and Ladder Company's house, T. H. Williams was called to the chair, and stated the object of the meeting; whereupon a committee of three were appointed to procure a night watch and make such other arrangements as in their judgment the safety and security of the town demand.

GEORGE SEARLE, Sec'y.

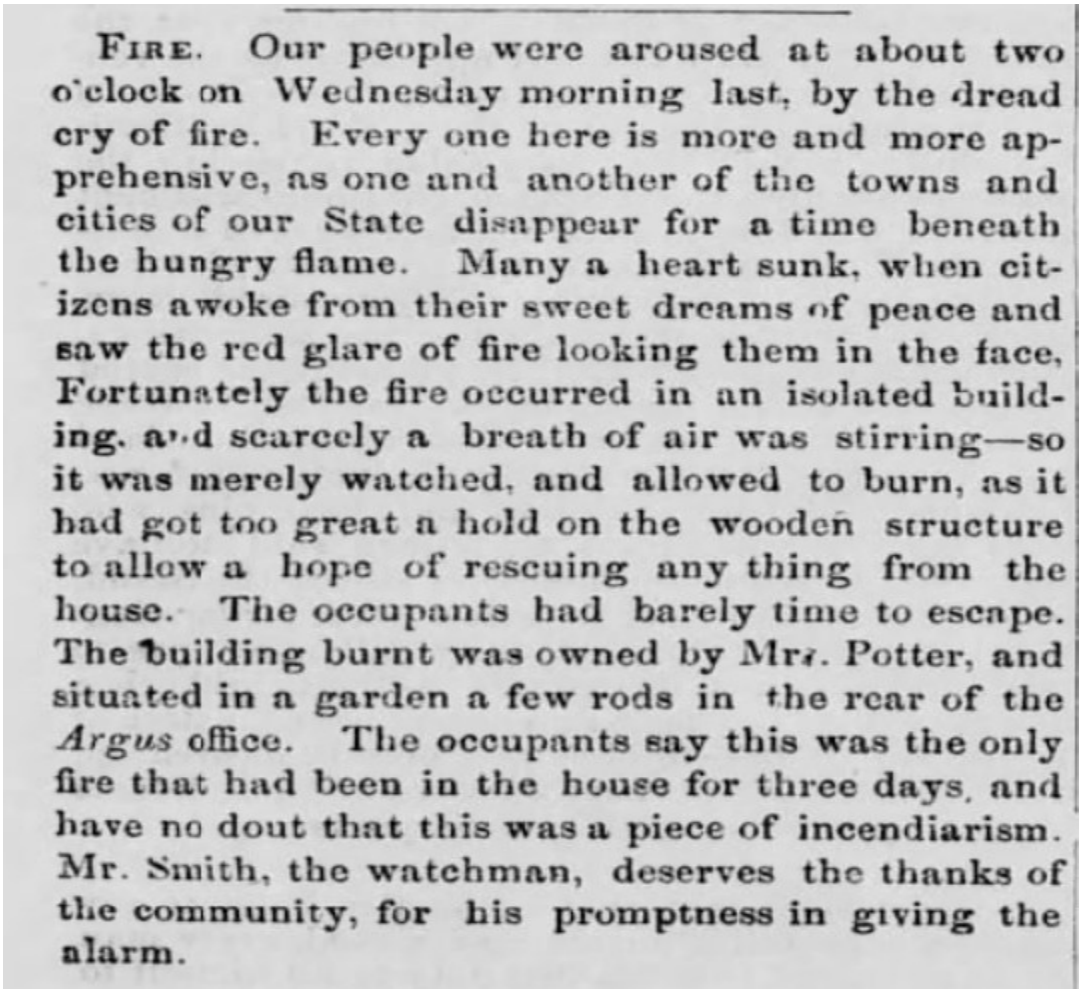
Feb. 2, 1855, the Night Watch Committee was formed

Thomas H. Williams, President.

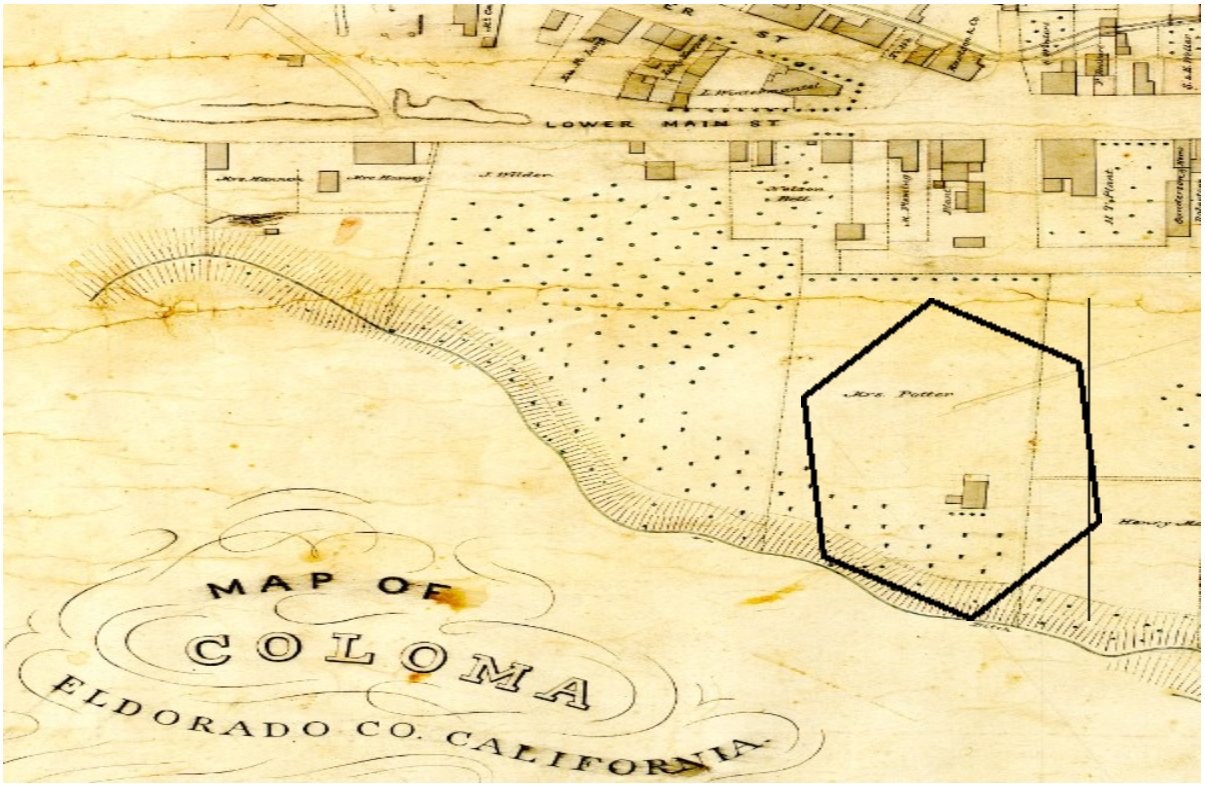
George Searle, Secretary. (Agent for Wells Fargo Express).

July 1855, Mrs. Potter home burns

The second fire recorded in Coloma was found in the Empire County Argus in July 1855 at the home of Mrs. Potter. The Hook and Ladder's Night Watch person, Mr. Smith, was credited with alerting the town to the fire. The Empire County Argus had recently moved across Lower Main Street from their original location at the time of the fire in the Potter house.



FIRE. Our people were aroused at about two o'clock on Wednesday morning last, by the dread cry of fire. Every one here is more and more apprehensive, as one and another of the towns and cities of our State disappear for a time beneath the hungry flame. Many a heart sunk, when citizens awoke from their sweet dreams of peace and saw the red glare of fire looking them in the face, Fortunately the fire occurred in an isolated building, and scarcely a breath of air was stirring—so it was merely watched, and allowed to burn, as it had got too great a hold on the wooden structure to allow a hope of rescuing any thing from the house. The occupants had barely time to escape. The building burnt was owned by Mrs. Potter, and situated in a garden a few rods in the rear of the *Argus* office. The occupants say this was the only fire that had been in the house for three days, and have no dout that this was a piece of incendiarism. Mr. Smith, the watchman, deserves the thanks of the community, for his promptness in giving the alarm.



Estelle Potter was the actor featured in the various theatrical productions produced by H.T. Plant, owner of the Cresent City Theater. She was mentioned in the *Empire County Argus* in the July 28, 1855, edition.

Potter home prior to fire

Feb. 1855 Fire Meeting

xxv

Fourth of July.

The citizens of Coloma and vicinity tender an invitation to the people of this County to join them in the celebration of the seventy-ninth anniversary of American independence. Ample preparation will be made for the convenience of all who may attend. The day from about 10 o'clock A. M., will be occupied with processions, orations, toasts, music, a dinner, &c., &c., and a grand ball will be given at the Metropolitan Hall in the evening, also a magnificent display of fireworks. The different Societies and Fire Companies are expected in their respective uniforms. An excellent Band of Music (Clapp's) from Sacramento will be in attendance and perform during the day and evening.

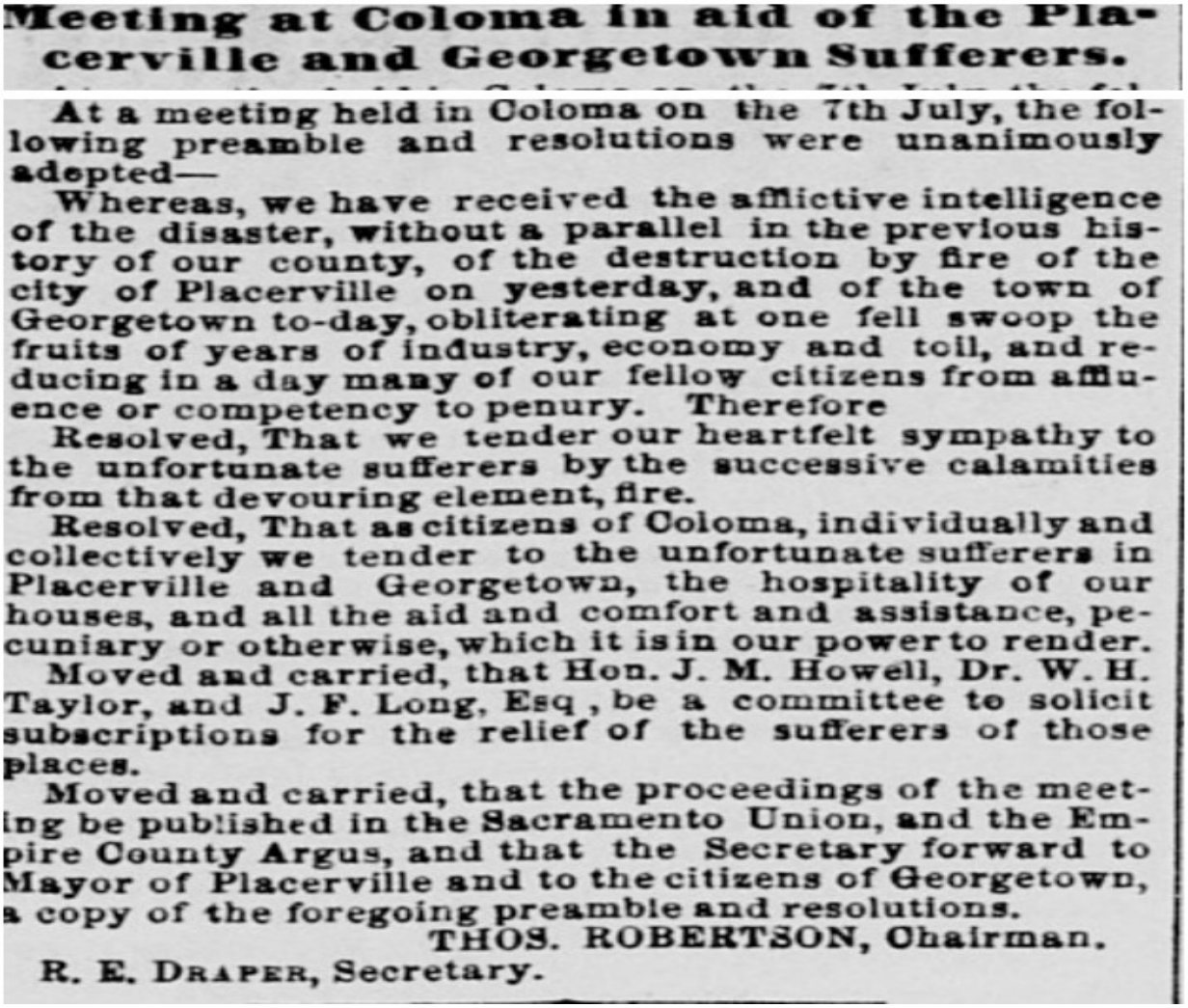
Col. L. SANDERS, of Sacramento, will deliver the oration.

Per order of Committee of Arrangements.

Coloma, June 16, 1855.

FIRE. An alarm of fire occurred on Wednesday evening last. A flourishing blaze was shooting up from the woodwork of the New York Bakery, alarming the citizens greatly for a few minutes, and greatly endangering the Town. This is the third or fourth fire occurring at this identical place within the last few months. The fire committee should now perform their duty and see this dangerous concern immediately repaired or completely removed. Too much carelessness exists around that establishment. Let it be corrected.

Proceeding with the devastating fires in Georgetown and Placerville, Coloma donated funds and labor to the rebuilding of these towns.



Meeting at Coloma in aid of the Placerville and Georgetown Sufferers.

At a meeting held in Coloma on the 7th July, the following preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted—

Whereas, we have received the afflictive intelligence of the disaster, without a parallel in the previous history of our county, of the destruction by fire of the city of Placerville on yesterday, and of the town of Georgetown to-day, obliterating at one fell swoop the fruits of years of industry, economy and toil, and reducing in a day many of our fellow citizens from affluence or competency to penury. Therefore

Resolved, That we tender our heartfelt sympathy to the unfortunate sufferers by the successive calamities from that devouring element, fire.

Resolved, That as citizens of Coloma, individually and collectively we tender to the unfortunate sufferers in Placerville and Georgetown, the hospitality of our houses, and all the aid and comfort and assistance, pecuniary or otherwise, which it is in our power to render.

Moved and carried, that Hon. J. M. Howell, Dr. W. H. Taylor, and J. F. Long, Esq., be a committee to solicit subscriptions for the relief of the sufferers of those places.

Moved and carried, that the proceedings of the meeting be published in the Sacramento Union, and the Empire County Argus, and that the Secretary forward to Mayor of Placerville and to the citizens of Georgetown, a copy of the foregoing preamble and resolutions.

THOS. ROBERTSON, Chairman.

R. E. DRAPER, Secretary.

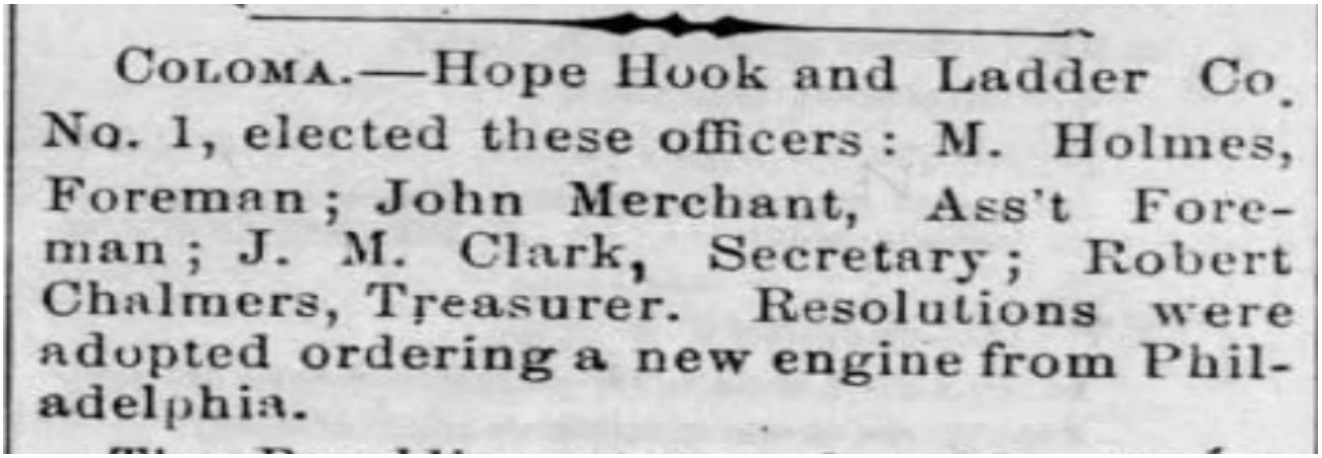
Members of the Committee for Placerville and Georgetown's Relief.

John M. Howell, district Attorney of El Dorado County, Relief, Dr. William H Taylor, Doctor, Coloma.

John F. Long, owner of the Metropolitan Saloon and later Justice of the Peace, Coloma Township.

Thomas Robertson, Attorney at Law, State Assembly Member.
(Owner of Coloma's Alhambra Saloon. Lawyer and first Judge of El Dorado County, and member-elect of the California State Legislature, dying before he could take office. Husband of Caroline (Stovall) Robertson, formerly the widow of William Mellon of Hinds County, Mississippi. Caroline's sister, Evaline Stovall Burton was married to Alden S. Bayley, a likely brother of Alcander John Bayley, Attorney and Assemblyman, and owner of The Bayley House on Pilot Hill.)

R.E. Draper, Justice of the Peace, Coloma.

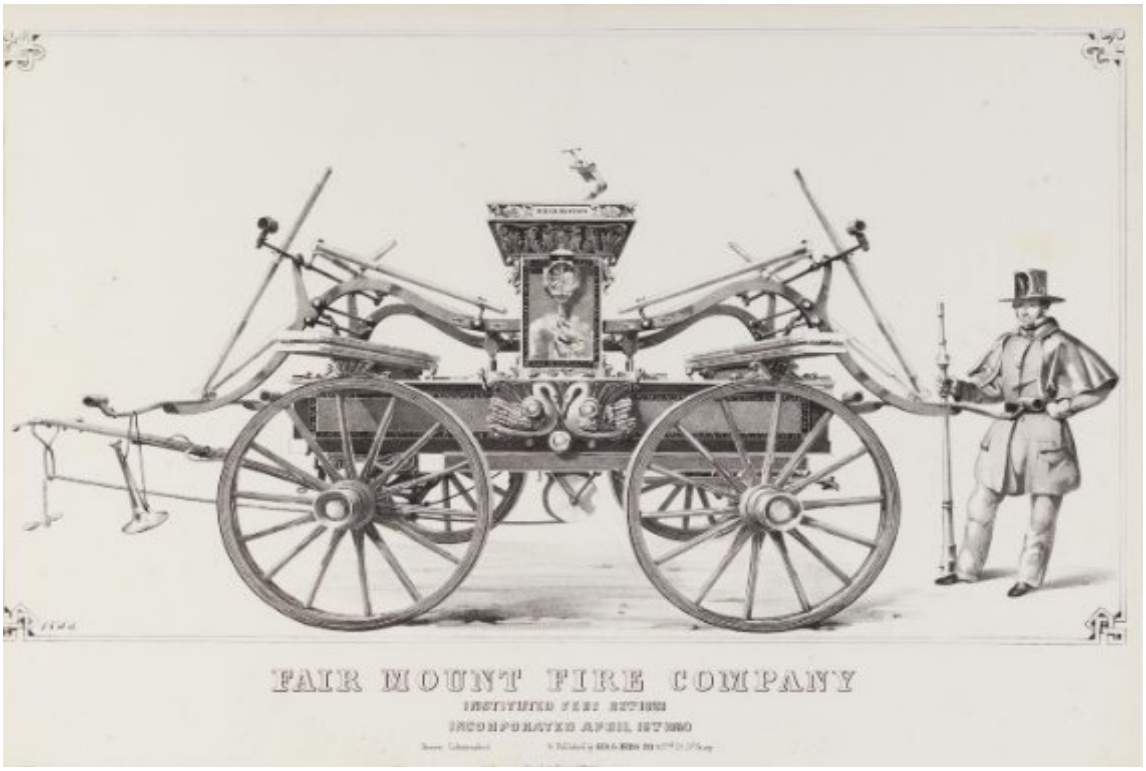


COLOMA.—Hope Hook and Ladder Co. No. 1, elected these officers: M. Holmes, Foreman; John Merchant, Ass't Foreman; J. M. Clark, Secretary; Robert Chalmers, Treasurer. Resolutions were adopted ordering a new engine from Philadelphia.

This reporter confused Placerville's Hope Hook and Ladder Company with the Coloma Hook and Ladder Company, but this is the only time the mention of the purchase of a fire engine for Coloma was found.

While the records do not indicate a purchase and delivery.

The Philadelphia business directory only lists one Fire Engine manufacturer the John Agnew & Company. They ceased operations sometime after 1859. No production or delivery records of this company exist today, however there were many of the company's fire pumpers in California. San Francisco, Sacramento and a few owned by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company.



Early 1850’s Advertising Card from John Agnew & Company showed their hand pumper fire engine.

January 24, 1858, Election of officers

John Marchant, Ass’t Foreman. American House and Marchant &Crocker

J.M. Clark, Secretary

Robert Chalmers, Treasurer. Orchardist and Vintner.

George Searle, the local Wells Fargo agent and principal in the company of McConnell & Company.

Thomas H. Williams was an attorney with the firm of Newell and Williams.

March 1861 Riot against the Chinese

Riot in Coloma.—A party of forty Irishmen made an attack Tuesday afternoon, on the Chinese quarter of the town of Coloma, and destroyed property to the amount of ten thousand dollars value. It appears to have been a wanton and cowardly act, as such transactions usually are. Some fifteen of the rioters were lodged in jail.

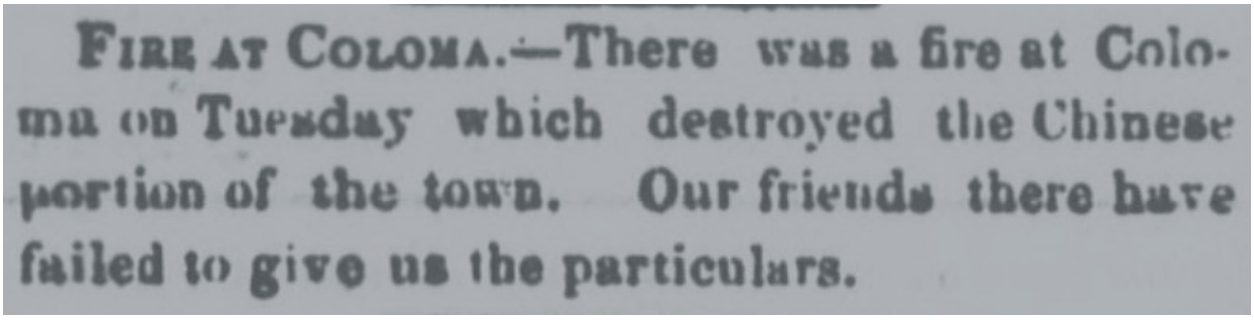
Outrage by Irishmen at Coloma—Large Amount of Property Destroyed.

Coloma, March 4, 1861.

A difficulty has occurred here between some Chinese and a number of Irishmen, in regard to the working of a claim under a Chinese house. This afternoon a party of about forty Irishmen marched into Chinatown and made a complete havoc of everything valuable. The damage is estimated from $10,000 to $15,000. Several of the Chinamen are badly hurt. The Sheriff was telegraphed for, and some fifteen have been arrested and are now lodged in jail. Our town has been in a lively excitement ever since the occurrence.

The various accounts of so called “Riots” destruction and damage do not breakdown what property was destroyed by fire or vandalism.

Sept 1864 fire at Chinatown

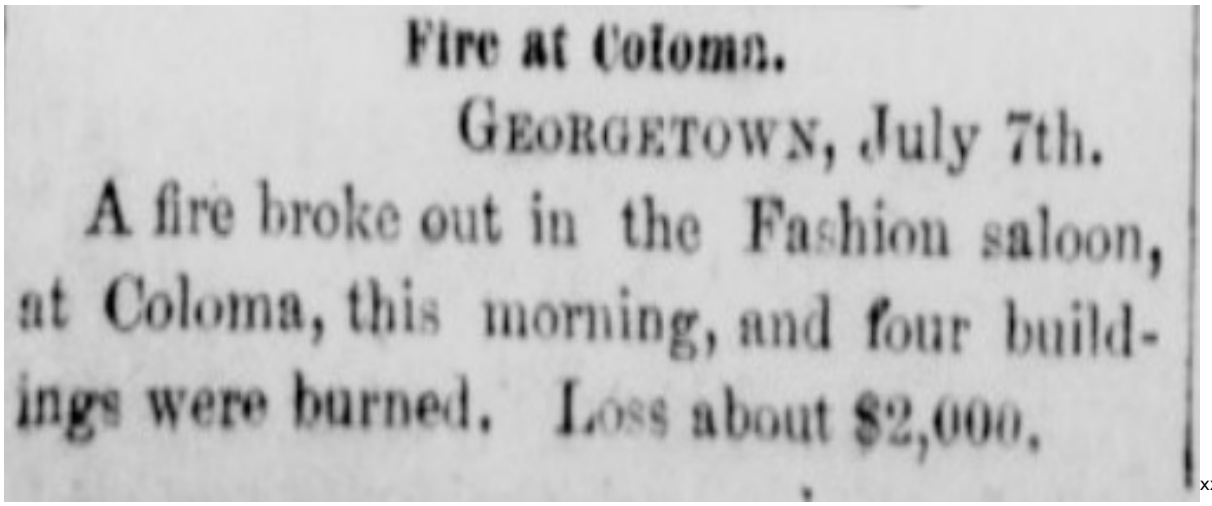


FIRE AT COLOMA.—There was a fire at Coloma on Tuesday which destroyed the Chinese portion of the town. Our friends there have failed to give us the particulars.

Sadly, reporting on the Chinese in town was not well documented by the local newspapers.

Fire Destroys Five Buildings

One of the largest reported structure fires in Coloma occurred in July 1873 destroying the Fashion Saloon and three other buildings.

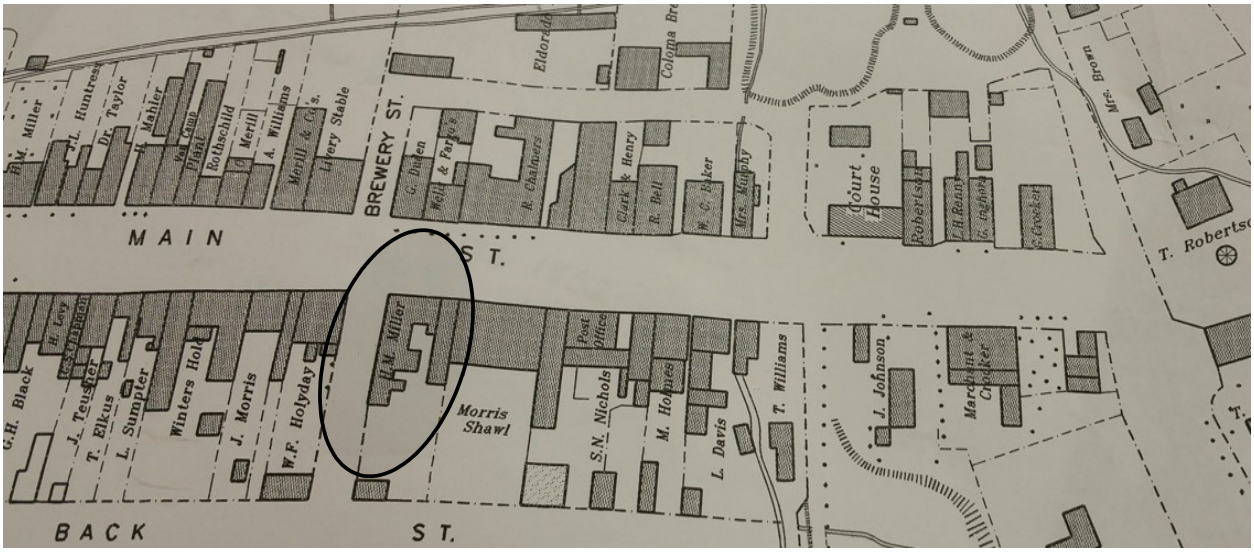


Fire at Coloma.

GEORGETOWN, July 7th.

A fire broke out in the Fashion saloon, at Coloma, this morning, and four buildings were burned. Loss about $2,000.

A fire in Coloma yesterday burned the Fashion saloon and other buildings. Loss, $5,000.



The Fashion Saloon location, then owned by Joseph C. Trescott, later he became owner of the Alhambra Saloon and Billiard Hall at the base of Piety Hill.

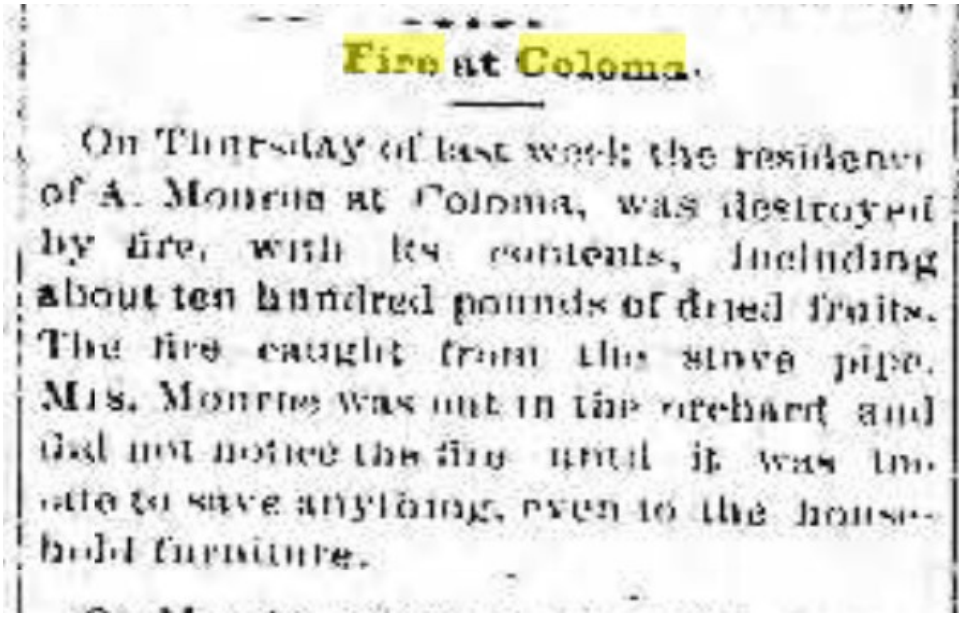
December 1875 Chalmers distillery burns.

Fire at Coloma.

COLOMA, December 16th.

Robert Chalmers vineyard distillery and contents were burned last evening; loss, $3,000. The winery and cellars are all right. There will be no stoppage of the business on account of the fire.

1883 Chinatown burns



Fire at Coloma.

On Thursday of last week the residence of A. Monroe at Coloma, was destroyed by fire, with its contents, including about ten hundred pounds of dried fruits. The fire caught from the stove pipe. Mrs. Monroe was out in the orchard and did not notice the fire until it was impossible to save anything, even to the household furniture.

Sept 21, 1889, Mt. Democrat

Aug. 1895 Dynamite explosion and fire in Chinatown

xxxiii

July 1902 Chinatown burned.

FIRE AT COLOMA.

From Thursday's Daily.

Last evening the home of John McKay at Coloma was destroyed by fire, the dwelling and contents being entirely consumed with the exception of a few minor articles of clothing, papers, etc.

April 1906

A fire occurred this morning at Coloma in which a cluster of shanties constituting the Coloma Chinatown were burned. A blind Chinaman, who was the sole occupant at the time built a fire in one of the buildings and then went to the river for water. While he was absent the building took fire and in a short time all of the adjacent buildings were destroyed, The structures were mere shacks and the loss occasioned by the fire is small.

December 1903 Sierra Nevada House/Hotel Burns

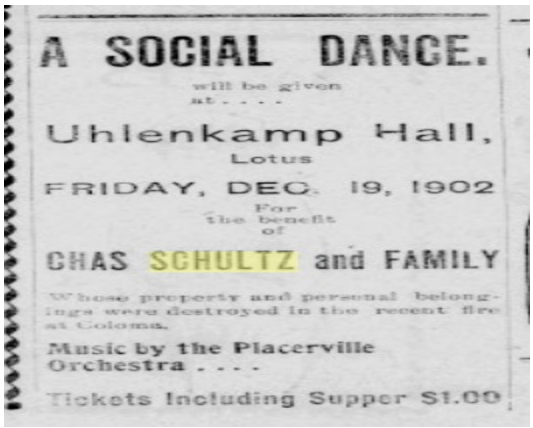
Burning of the Coloma Hotel.

The Sierra Nevada Hotel at Coloma, the property of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Schulze, together with the stable and outbuildings were burned to the ground at about 5:30 o'clock Thursday morning. Mr. Schulze and family were asleep in the building at the time of the fire but were awakened in time to escape with their lives. Everything was lost even to their wearing apparel. While Mrs. Schulze was being assisted to the ground from the porch, she fell, sustaining severe bruises and serious internal injuries. The loss which falls heavily upon Mr. and Mrs. Schulze, includes the hotel, barn, ten tons of hay, two horses, wagons, stock of liquors, wood and all the household goods and winter supplies, $200 belonging to the Odd Fellows, and other moneys belonging to the family, was lost in the destructive fire. The origin of the fire is a mystery, but it is supposed to have started in the bar room. There was no insurance on any of the property.

Sierra Nevada House/Hotel #1, Listed as prior to the1903 fire, date unknown. HABS photo library of Congress

The owner of the Sierra Nevada House Charles Schultze also owned Uncle Tom’s Cabin bar and resort outside of Georgetown. He spent his summers running that restaurant and bar before selling to the Lawyer family.

The Coloma community bands together to help the burned-out family.



A SOCIAL DANCE.

will be given at . . . .

Uhlenkamp Hall,

Lotus

FRIDAY, DEC. 19, 1902

For the benefit of

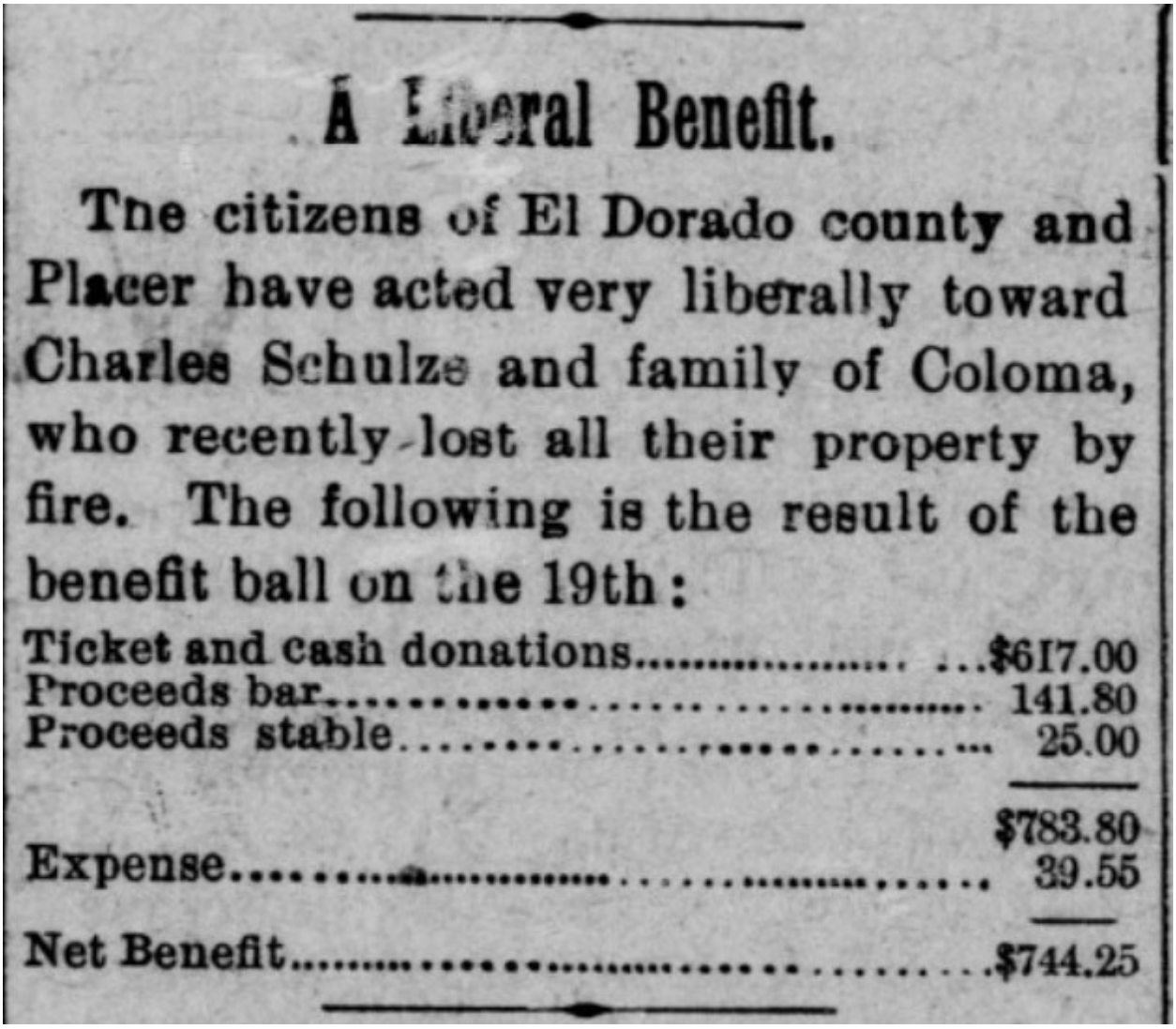
CHAS SCHULTZ and FAMILY

Whose property and personal belongings were destroyed in the recent fire at Coloma.

Music by the Placerville Orchestra . . . .

Tickets Including Supper $1.00

Uhlenkamp Hall was located on what now is Beach Court, its rock walls are still standing.



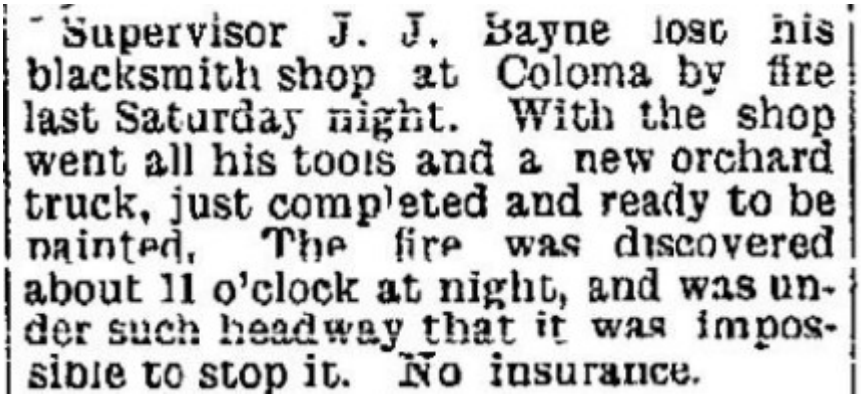
A Liberal Benefit.

The citizens of El Dorado county and Placer have acted very liberally toward Charles Schulze and family of Coloma, who recently lost all their property by fire. The following is the result of the benefit ball on the 19th:

Ticket and cash donations	$617.00
Proceeds bar	141.80
Proceeds stable	25.00
	$783.80
Expense	39.55
Net Benefit	$744.25

May 1910 Wildfire

Bayne's Blacksmiths Shop Burns



Supervisor J. J. Bayne lost his blacksmith shop at Coloma by fire last Saturday night. With the shop went all his tools and a new orchard truck, just completed and ready to be painted. The fire was discovered about 11 o'clock at night, and was under such headway that it was impossible to stop it. No insurance.

Aug. 8,1914 Mt. Democrat

Vernon Home Burns, Dick Vernon Burned

Two El Dorado Homes Destroyed by Fire

Special to th Union.

PLACERVILLE (El Dorado Co.), Feb. 8.—Two conflagrations, one at Rescue Sunday afternoon and the other at Coloma Saturday night, completely destroyed residence property and all contents. Only meager details of each fire were obtainable here today.

The six-room dwelling at Rescue owned by Mrs. Caroline Wulff, was prey to the flames, and everything was lost. The origin of the fire there is unknown, but in the face of the strong gale the house must have been quickly demolished. Barns and other buildings close to the house were perhaps destroyed.

The fire at Coloma occurred Saturday night about 8 o'clock, resulting in the utter ruin of the house of Misses Adelaide and Gussie Vernon. All the contents of the place were burned, including furniture, fixtures and personal effects. The occupants of the house considered themselves lucky to even escape with the clothes they wore. The sisters are now domiciled in the home of George Maler.

The Coloma fire was caused by the explosion of a kerosene lamp, and the flames quickly communicated to other parts of the house.

Feb 1915

HOME DESTROYED; COLOMA YOUTH IS BURNED

Dick Vernon, of El Dorado County, Has Narrow Escape; Sister in Room Where Explosion Occurs

PLACERVILLE (El Dorado Co.), January 8.—A disastrous fire at Coloma, this county, destroyed the residence owned by Addie, Nancy, Grace and Dick Vernon. The fire was caused by the explosion of an oil lamp. Dick Vernon was badly burned. Miss Grace Vernon was very sick and in the room when the explosion occurred. She escaped without injury.

Richard Barton, a young man, was asleep in an upstairs bedroom when the fire started, and when finally aroused barely had time to escape. He was forced to run the gauntlet of flames, and sustained painful burns on the face, arms and hands, and in addition his hair was badly singed.

The fire was already under full headway when neighbors and others responded to the alarm, but their efforts availed nothing. The loss was partially covered by insurance.

The Misses Nancy and Gussie Vernon had only arrived in Coloma a week ago to assist their sister, Miss Adelaide, in caring for another sister, Miss Grace, who has been in failing health.

1919 Coloma School Burns

Poet Markham's Old School House Burns

Special to the Union.

PLACERVILLE, El Dorado Co., Sept. 13.—The Coloma schoolhouse was destroyed by fire Friday evening. The origin of the fire is unknown.

The building was one of the landmarks of the historic town. It was erected on the site of the old courthouse and was built after the removal of the county seat to Placerville. Many educators who later became famous had taught in the old building. Markham, author of "The Man With the Hoe," and at one time county superintendent of schools in El Dorado county, was at one time a teacher there.

The building and contents were insured for $800 through the agency of Charles A. Rasmussen of Lotus. Reconstruction will probably be commenced at once.

Former Residents of Coloma Asked to Aid

Special to the Union.

COLOMA, El Dorado Co., Oct. 29.—An appeal is made to former pupils of the Coloma school and former residents of the old mining camp for a small contribution to aid in rebuilding the schoolhouse which was destroyed by fire last month by the committee having in charge the Hallowe'en ball to raise funds.

It is proposed to have a roll of honor on which will be placed the names of those answering "present" by donating $1. The roll of honor will be framed and hung in the new schoolhourse. Send contributions to Mrs. Ella McKay Morris, chairman of the committee, Coloma, California.

The schoolhouse which was burned and the two churches were the oldest frame buildings in California. The schoolhouse was the El Dorado country courthouse until 1860, when the county seat was moved to Placerville. The churches are in use yet, after standing nearly seventy years.

Coloma Valley Has Recovered From Fires

COLOMA (El Dorado Co.), Sept. 6.—The Coloma Valley has been very beautiful this Summer and visiting motorists have enjoyed the wild scenery here.

For many years the Coloma hills were barren wastes, due to the ravages of forest fires. These fires destroyed the pines, and the dry grass covered hills were never pretty. There has been no forest fire for twenty years, and an immense forest now covers the hills. These immense oaks and pines cover the landscape to such an extent the entire country is now green the year round, and the Coloma Valley is now one of the most beautiful scenes in California.

The American River flowing through the Coloma Valley also appeals to visitors, and the river is rapidly becoming a great outdoor attraction for those who like to swim.

1921

Brush Fire Is H
Near Marshall

The state forestry
a report yesterday
burning near Marsh
at Coloma.

The fire was repo
serious and was be
control through the
fire wardens and a
teer fire fighters h
from the district.

The state forest
without final figur
covered by the blaz
lieved it will not ex
acres, all in brush a

COLOMA HOTEL BURNS

Sierra Nevada House Destroyed by Fire

Early Saturday morning fire was discovered in the kitchen of the Sierra Nevada Hotel at Coloma and while the alarm was given at once and the Placerville fire department sent to the rescue, the flames spread rapidly and the heat was so intense that practically nothing was saved. While Chief O. N. Hirst made a record run to Coloma the fire had gained such headway by the time he arrived that there was no chance to save the hotel, but by quick work the surrounding buildings were saved.

The hotel and contents were totally destroyed.

Dan McLeod, lessee of the hotel, was able to save only a valise and some currency in the safe, losing nearly a thousand dollars worth of personal property with no insurance.

The building was owned by Andrew Marchini, now a resident of San Francisco, and was insured for a part of its value.

It is a serious loss for Coloma where there is need for a good hotel.

Sierra Nevad House #2 burns

Historic Coloma Loses Its Hotel

COLOMA, Sept. 26.—Fire starting at 9:30 o'clock this morning destroyed the Sierra Nevada Hotel here, a frame structure of two stories, erected in 1902 following the destruction of the original historic Sierra Nevada Hotel by flames.

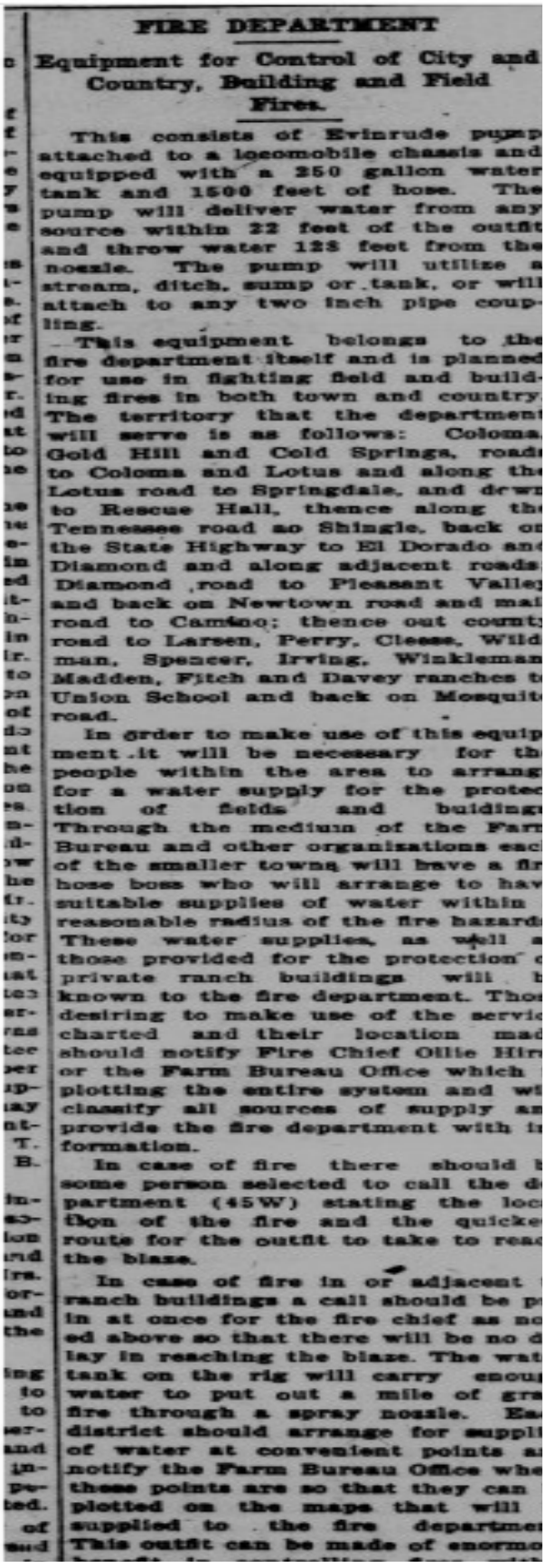
Citizens formed a bucket brigade and their efforts were supplemented by the fire truck which came over from Placerville.

Brush Fire Is Reported Near Marshall Monument

The state forestry office received a report yesterday of a brush fire burning near Marshall's monument at Coloma.

The fire was reported not to be serious and was being put under control through the efforts of state fire wardens and a crew of volunteer fire fighters hastily recruited from the district.

The state forestry office was without final figures on the area covered by the blaze, but it is believed it will not exceed 400 or 500 acres, all in brush and grass land.



FIRE DEPARTMENT

Equipment for Control of City and Country, Building and Field Fires.

This consists of Evinrude pump attached to a locomobile chassis and equipped with a 250 gallon water tank and 1500 feet of hose. The pump will deliver water from any source within 22 feet of the outfit and throw water 123 feet from the nozzle. The pump will utilize a stream, ditch, sump or tank, or will attach to any two inch pipe coupling.

This equipment belongs to the fire department itself and is planned for use in fighting field and building fires in both town and country. The territory that the department will serve is as follows: Coloma, Gold Hill and Cold Springs, roads to Coloma and Lotus and along the Lotus road to Springdale, and down to Rescue Hall, thence along the Tennessee road ao Shingle, back on the State Highway to El Dorado and Diamond and along adjacent roads, Diamond road to Pleasant Valley and back on Newtown road and main road to Camino; thence out county road to Larsen, Perry, Cleese, Wildman, Spencer, Irving, Winkleman, Madden, Fitch and Davey ranches to Union School and back on Mosquito road.

In order to make use of this equipment it will be necessary for the people within the area to arrange for a water supply for the protection of fields and buildings. Through the mediuun of the Farm Bureau and other organizations each of the smaller towns will have a fire hose boss who will arrange to have suitable supplies of water within reasonable radius of the fire hazards. These water supplies, as well as those provided for the protection of private ranch buildings will be known to the fire department. Those desiring to make use of the service charted and their location made should notify Fire Chief Ollie Hinn or the Farm Bureau Office which is plotting the entire system and will classify all sources of supply and provide the fire department with information.

In case of fire there should be some person selected to call the department (45W) stating the location of the fire and the quickest route for the outfit to take to reach the blaze.

In case of fire in or adjacent ranch buildings a call should be put in at once for the fire chief as noted above so that there will be no delay in reaching the blaze. The water tank on the rig will carry enough water to put out a mile of grass fire through a spray nozzle. Each district should arrange for supplies of water at convenient points and notify the Farm Bureau Office where these points are so that they can be plotted on the maps that will be supplied to the fire department. This outfit can be made of enormous

Aug.6 1925 Wildfire.

1926

1926, August

LOTUS-COLOMA FIRE

(By Joe Hooper)

The recent forest fire was t
most spectacular and dangerous fi
that has ever burned in the Colon
valley. In past years the fires ha
burned along the bridges paral
with the American River. This fi
burned from west to east across t
Lotus and Coloma valleys and e
dangered the farms in its course.

The fire started in the Webb
Creek district and Friday burn
across the Lotus ridge on a five-m
front extending from the Shing
Springs road to Clark's Creek Mou
tain. Saturday morning the f
was burning in the pines back of L
tus. Every afternoon the west wi
carried the fire along. Saturday
ternoon the fire approached Ma
Street in Lotus and six backfires
the volunteer fighters failed to st
it. The main fight centered arou
the Lotus mercantile store and r
idence and only the arrival of t
Placerville fire truck saved the sto

The fire swept north of the to
and the fighters stopped it along t
road and the fire truck saved the L
tus bridge. The farms below Lot
were endangered all the time a
many of the men fought fire thi
nights.

The fire jumped the American River below Lotus and swept across the Sun Hill country toward the bend of the river below Point Pleasant Beach. It jumped the river a sceond time on to a knoll on the west side of my farm. I had firebreaks plowed and the fighters stopped it along this line. It burned into the old mining diggings on the north side of my farm. I laid awake all Saturday night with the fire burning only a few hundred feet away

It threatened the farms along the north side of the river and also, the entire town of Coloma. Over fifty men from Gold Hill, Coloma and Lotus hurried to the fire. The men ran a backfire across the Othick farm and around the farms of Chester Carver, Harry West, LeRoy Thomas, J H. Gallagher and E. A. Thole to Dutch Creek. These farms are situated at the base of Mt. Murphy.

The fire presented a spectacular sight as it leaped up the steep sides of Mts. Murphy and Perry. At times small fires were leaping ahead on the high points a thousand feet ahead of the main fire.

By night the danger had passed.

The work of the Placerville fire truck at the Lotus store, not only saved the buildings there, but prevented the fire crossing to the Coloma Ridge with the possible destruction of some of the Coloma farms.

In view of this disastrous fire, and remembering the fire that destroped the town of El Dorado several years ago, I have a suggestion to make. I would suggest that this county have our legislautre pass a fire law for this county to protect our towns from these fires. Pass a law creating a fire zone around Placerville, Camino, Diamond and the other towns of the county, placing this zone in charge of the state fire ranger. It would be his duty each March to see that the towns are surrounded by fire breaks. Irrigated farms constitute a fire break and the owners of all idle lands in the zones should be compelled to run twenty foot plowed strips across their land.

The past two years I have plowed fire breaks each March along the west side of my orchard to stop possible fires from any campers that might enter the idle land west of my farm. It did not turn out this way but the fire started ten miles away, yet it endangered my farm. My fire breaks kept the fire away from my orchard, and it was the dangerous mining diggings that presented a danger to my home.

These fires are not only dangerous but they call the farmers from their work when the fruit is ripe and the work heaviest on the farms.

The various organizations of this county have a real opportunity in securing a fire zone law that will aid in protecting the property from loss by fire.

Now that we have read the story of the fire just prepare to enjoy and read what a daily paper said about the same fire. The headlines were large and said "Fire Threatens El Dorado Towns." "Kelsey, Georgetown and Placerville in Path of Conflagration." Buildings Worth $30,000 are Destroyed Near Coloma."

"Defying efforts of more than 200 men to halt its progress, a large forest fire tonight was sweeping toward Kelsey, location of the historic museum and shop of James W. Marshall discoverer of gold in California. The fire late today was within a mile of William Poor's store at Kelsey and but four miles south of Georgetown, famous mining town. All available men have been sent from this city, the last contingent having twenty volunteers

With the fire raging along a ten-mile front, workers reported late tonight the wind had shifted, causing

the blaze to spread in several directions. Although the fire is only five miles from Placerville, O. N. Hirst, fire chief, said he believed the American River would save the town if the wind does not spring up again."

(Continued on page 2)

HISTORIC TOWNS THREATENED BY SERIOUS FIRES

SACRAMENTO, July 20. (U.P.)—Residents of the picturesque old mining towns of Coloma and Lotus breathed easier today, as fires that threatened to wipe them off the map were put under control by volunteer fire fighters.

Several ranch houses, and a fruit packing shed were destroyed, the school house and a store were scorched, and the entire town of Lotus threatened with destruction for several hours.

Timely arrival of Assistant Ranger Hugo Lindbloom with a fire truck saved the town of Coloma, just as the flames had entered the city limits and had reached the Native Son's building.

Families of both towns had gathered their movable effects, and were prepared to flee in the path of the flames.

Three other fires centered in the same area, near Shingle Springs and Nashville, and at the Horseshoe Bar state game refuge, where scores of quail, cottontail and deer were burned.

Approximately 25,000 acres were blackened by the week-end fires in El Dorado county. The Coloma-Lotus fire burned along a 10-mile front, covering approximately 15,000 acres.

Wildfire

PRPC post card of the Native Sons Retirement Home.

May 1, 1931

FIRE STOPS BASEBALL GAME

COLOMA, Calif.—(United Press) —A whole baseball team scored a putout recently. The team, discovering the house of George Pontain ablaze, quit the game, formed a bucket brigade, and stopped the fire.

August 1921 Wilder farm burns

[i] A Pictorial History of the Fire Engine, Volume 1, Matt Lee 1997
[ii] Empire County Argus, Nov. 19, 1853, page 3.
[iii] Empire County Argus, Dec. 10, 1853, Page 2
[iv] Empire County Argus, Dec. 10, 1853, page 2.
[v] Empire County Argus, Nov. 19 1853
[vi] Empire County Argus, Dec. 24. 1853, page3.
[vii] Empire County Argus, Dec. 24, 1853, page 2.
[viii] Empire County Argus, Dec. 24, 1853
[ix] Empire County Argus, Dec. 24, 1853, page3
[x] Empire County Argus, Jun 24 1854, page 2
[xi] Empire County Argus, July 15, 1854, page 3
[xii] Empire County Argus, July 28, 1854, page 2
[xiii] Empire County Argus, Sept. 16, 1854, page 2
[xiv] Statues of California, Fifth Session, page 42
[xv] Empire County Argus, Sept. 9, 1854
[xvi]
Daily Alta California, Aug. 7, 1854, page 2.
[xvii] Empire County Argus, Sept. 16, 1854
[xviii] Empire County Argus, Oct. 7, 1854
[xix] Empire County Argus, Oct. 7, 1854
[xx]
[xxi] Georgetown News, Nov. 9, 1854
[xxii] Empire County Argus, Jan. 14, 1853, page 3
[xxiii] Empire County Argus, May 20, 1854, page 2
[xxiv] Empire County Argus, Feb. 17, 1855, page 2
[xxv] Empire County Argus, Feb. 17, 1855, page 2
[xxvi] Empire County Argus, June 30, 1855, page 2
[xxvii] Empire County Argus, Jan. 5, 1856, page 2
[xxviii] Sacramento Age Jan 24, 1858, page 1
[xxix]Weekly Butte Record, March 9, 1861, page 3
[xxx] Sacramento Daily Union, March 5, 1861, page
[xxxi] Mountain Democrat, Sept. 17, 1864, page 2
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[xxxiii] Fresno Weekly Expositor, Aug. 21, 1895, page